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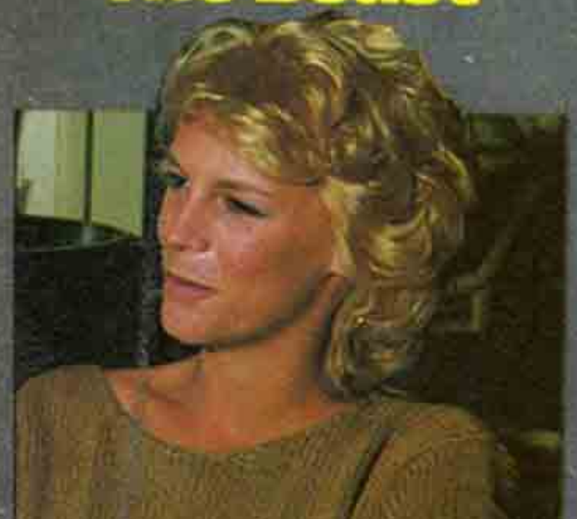
'The Beast'



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FANGORIA

#15

MONSTERS • ALIENS • BIZARRE CREATURES

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THANK YOU: Swamp Thing cast and crew, Ben Melnicker, Mike Uslan, Mark Urman, Tom Burman, Debra Hill, Jamie Lee Curtis, Mick Garris, Gene Siskel, Roger Ebert, Richard Gordon, Ray Harryhausen, Richard O'Brien, Scot Holton, Don Coscarelli, Charles Kaufman, Janene Quick, Fredell Pogodin, Eddie Egan, John Landis, Don Glut and especially YOU!

Dedicated to Frederick Wiseman, documentarian, 'cause truth is scarier than fiction.

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The How and the Why

Two questions have turned up in our mail with increasing frequency, both of which deserve detailed answers, though they have both been dealt with in previous letter columns. These are: how do we decide which films to cover (or, why didn't we cover such-and-such), and why don't we criticize films. For me, these two questions are closely related, and this time out, we're going to do our best to answer them.

The first question we ask when we hear of a new horror film is, can we get coverage? The answer is almost invariably "yes." The only films that we have not covered due to lack of cooperation are the films of Brian de Palma. He doesn't even *know* that we want to interview him because his press agent doesn't answer calls from FANGORIA. Some people just can't get past our name.

The second question is, will our coverage be unique? Even if FANGORIA happens to be your favorite magazine, we know it's not the only one you read. If some other magazine gives you *Conan* up the kazoo, don't expect to read the same stuff here.

The third question is, will the film be popular? Does that sound crass? The thing is, if I indulge my own taste in selecting films to cover, you'd *still* be reading about *Mother's Day* and *The Shining* (two of my favorites that most of you loathed), and next to nothing about certain other, very popular films (we all know which ones those are, right?). I also liked *Without Warning*, but I knew enough not to clutter up the pages of FANGORIA with *that*.

And here we come to the question of criticism. There are films that we have praised in these pages. For instance, we screened *The Elephant Man* way in advance, loved it, and our article in issue #9 says quite a few very nice things about it. But that was a rare exception. Usually, we haven't seen the film, and therefore have nothing to say about the quality. All we can talk about are the *intentions* of the filmmaker; *Fade to Black* is a perfect example of a good idea that went bad. If we really have sound reason to believe that a film we are covering is going to be no damn good, and that most people who go to see it are going to feel ripped off, then we don't cover it. There just isn't enough room in this bimonthly magazine for these movies.

Well then, I hear you asking, why don't you at least warn us not to go see these money-wasters?

There's a very good reason. As Stephen King has said, if you love horror movies, you've really got to like *drek*. His example is *Prophecy*, Stephen King's favorite piece of *drek*. I can't stand that movie, but I'm not going to sit behind my editorial desk and tell you not to enjoy it. Nor will I tell you that you are obliged to appreciate the subtleties of Nicholas Worth's performance in *Don't Answer The Phone*. In this field, critics and popularity polls (like the one in this issue) are not to be taken seriously.

Another good reason is lead-time. I am writing these words in August. The last film I saw was *An American Werewolf in London*, which, by the way, is pretty good. For you, reading this in October, all that information does is satisfy your curiousity about my taste.

Those of you who really want criticism along with your FANGORIA ought to subscribe. Subscriber issues have a second, protective cover stapled to it, and on that cover are printed reviews of current and recent horror films, written by "The Thing in Dungeon #5," a creature whose taste is remarkably similiar to my own. The reason the Thing writes our reviews is that he is the one critic that we figured no one would ever take too seriously.

Which, with horror movies, is exactly the way it should be.

Anyway, if you'll keep the above remarks firmly in mind, here's my list of the best horror films over the last two years, in alphabetical order:

ALIEN, The Brood, The Changeling, Dawn of the Dead, The Fog, The Howling, Mother's Day, Phantasm, Salem's Lot, The Shining and, to make it a round 11, *The Wolfen.*

And up against the wall with anyone who doesn't agree!

—Bob Martin

The Postal Zone

About S.A.S.E.'s

Many of our readers have sent letters to us, requesting replies, including self-addressed stamped envelopes. While some of these, by some miracle, actually do get answered, the fact of the matter is that our two-person editorial staff (Martin and Greenberger) very seldom have the time to engage in such correspondence.

However, we don't want to frustrate this practice, as those 18-centers go a long way toward covering our subway and coffee expenses. All future gifts of this nature will continue to be cheerfully accepted; just don't get ticked off if you don't hear from us—we're busy trying to make FANGORIA an even better magazine! Our address:

FANGORIA/The Postal Zone
475 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

Terror In Academe!!!

Dear FANGORIA,

. . . I just read in issue #13 that your magazine was trashed by a teacher, and I'm writing to tell you that not all teachers consider your mag trash. Just this year, I used your magazine as a visual aid in a speech. My teacher became quite interested in the issue and, after classs, asked if he could read it.

Weeks later, I brought a new issue of FANGORIA to school; my teacher again asked if he could read it. With the right teachers, reading your mag in school is just fine.

Ed Edgell
555 North Main Street
Mount Angel, OR 97362

Dear FANGORIA:

. . . I had to chuckle at Brian Carbonneau's letter in #13. I had a similiar problem, only on the other side of the fence. I, too, took my "Fangs" and STARLOG to school, but was accused of being weird by some of my students (and some parents)! However, these mags were the only ones anyone would pick up. And if it gets kids to read, its OK by me.

I happen to be a great fan of horror and SF, and my kids (and their parents) will just have to live with it. Those conservative teachers don't know what they're missing!

An English Teacher
Carlsbad, NM

We hate to inject a depressing note into your cheerful and heartening letter, but I hope our readers will catch the significance of the fact that your letter is anonymous—that our schools are where most censorship campaigns are begun. And we're not just talking about monster magazines. But thanks for the nice words!

Volunteers of Fangoria!

Dear FANGORIA,

. . . You will be happy to know that FANGORIA is selling quite heavily, and with great speed around my town—thanks to me! Everywhere I go, I have the undisputed habit of showing off your magazine, with great pride in my love for horror cinema. Even in the supermarket, I can't help but notice that they shove your magazine back to a point where nothing is exposed, while other garbage is put up front. I take immediate action and move the stack of FANGORIAs upwards, so that everyone can discover you!

Thanks for releasing horror out of its dark closet and showcasing it as a new wave of cinematic art.

George Moreno, Jr.
7918 Glengarden
San Antonio, TX 78224

Thanks for your efforts on our behalf—and we wouldn't mind if any of our other readers did the same thing (we do it all the time at newsstands here in New York!). If anybody tries to stop you, tell them you're an Official Fangoria Display Agent!

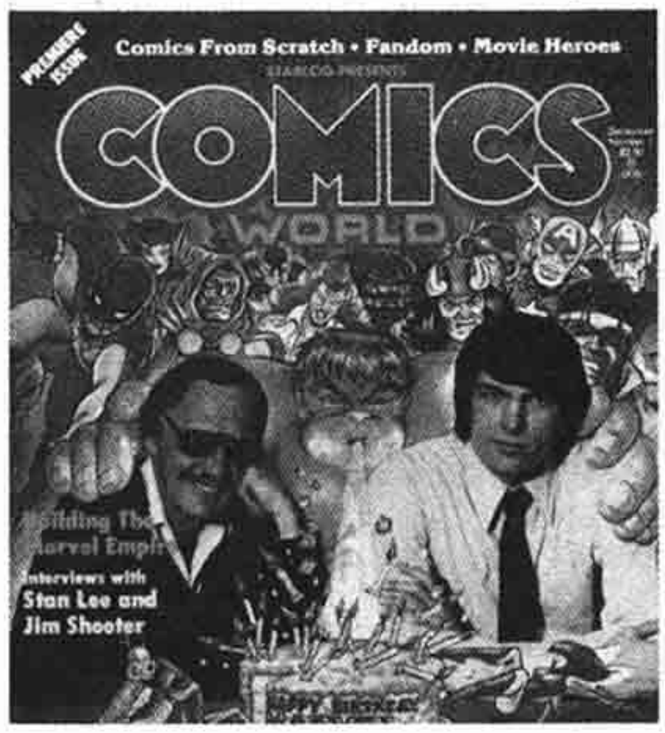
Something For Everyone

Dear FANGORIA:

. . . I am delighted with some of the directions FANGORIA is taking, but I vehemently protest the current increase in the coverage of comics. It is my opinion that FANGORIA is no place for comics. Science fiction and fantasy also should be excluded from the magazine. FANGORIA should be exclusively the territory for horror films. STARLOG and FUTURE LIFE sufficiently cover these types of films.

Michael R. Owen
1035 Kains Avenue #4
Albany, CA 94706

We've got good news for everybody; following the completion of Ron Goulart's "Horror in the Comics" series, comics coverage will sharply diminish in FANGORIA, and will be concerned solely with comics of immediate interest to horror fans. Fangorian comic fans should take heart,



however, as our managing editor, Bob Greenberger, has recently become editor of the newest member of our family of publications—COMICS WORLD, on sale soon (plug, plug—are you happy now, B.G.?).

Try, Try Again

Dear FANGORIA,

. . . Something that's been bothering me is all that those (censored), Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert, have been doing to our favorite movies. Could you please print an address where we could write to them about this. And please, try to give us the home address.

Court Gewer
1892 Marco Place
Venice, CA 90291

Sorry we censored your letter, but since the talented two are our guests this issue, we decided to call a moratorium on the name-calling. We ran the address of Gene Siskel's newspaper office some time ago, but Siskel said he never got any letters! Not even ours! He also said he never heard of FANGORIA—we all know that's impossible! Anyway, we have to ask everybody to

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write again (whether you love 'em or hate 'em), this time to Siskel and/or Ebert in care of FANGORIA. All the letters we receive will be sent on to the esteemed critics—by registered mail.

At this point, we hear a still, small voice in the back of our heads—"Hey! How about a letter about MOVIES, you dolt?" OK . . .

A Letter about Movies!

Dear FANGORIA:

. . . I loved the *American Werewolf* article (issue #13) and I'm looking forward to the movie. Werewolves are my favorite monsters; it's about time someone started doing them justice. I disagree with Landis on *The Howling*'s werewolves, though. To me, those are the best-looking werewolves. They are not people with fur pasted to their face, nor are they actual animals. They are true werewolves, wolflike men, combining wolf and human characteristics, which is what makes them supernatural. Who wants to see a regular wolf on all fours?

While on the subject of werewolves, how about an article on the werewolf of Spain, Paul Naschy?

Steve Chesser
POB 115
Middleburg, FL 32068

Naschy is kind of hard for us to reach for an interview; however, we have contacted a Naschy expert who may soon be doing an overview of his career for us. Meanwhile, here's a shot from his latest werewolf adventure, The Night of the Werewolf.

This Man Is A Doctor!

Dear Sirs,

. . . I read Whitley Streiber's novel *The Wolfen* with great pleasure when it was first published, and looked forward with keen anticipation to the movie version.

Your recent (issue #13) interview with Michael Wadleigh dampened my enthusiasm a bit. It seemed to me that he was taking far too many liberties with the storyline and characters of a very good horror novel. In particular, the killing of a millionaire in Battery Park seemed totally out of keeping with the concept of the Wolfen living unnoticed for centuries in our inner city slums.

When I went to see *The Wolfen*, I was soon caught up in the beautifully done job of adaptation, although I still found some of the changes irritating. Only gradually did I see that the inconsistency of the first killing was an added

element of mystery; seen after the nature of the killers had been revealed, the millionaire's killing remained a mystery until the end. And what an end! The book had a satisfactory conclusion, but the movie's ending is far better and a total surprise.

My only gripe is that the very strong character of Detective Neff was converted into the female supporting character of Dr. Neff, a regrettable example of the sexism found in so many horror and SF films.

Dr. David F. Duncan
21 Cypress Drive West
R.R. #2
Carbondale, IL62901

It might interest you to know some of the strange history of that film. After Wadleigh delivered his director's cut, Orion Pictures unleashed a battery of editors on it (you may have noticed a lot of editors in the credits.). In an effort to make the film more "commercial," they edited a version with no Indians in it, a version with no terrorists, a version where Finney kills the wolves, and one where Neff kills the wolves. None of these versions worked as well as Wadleigh's, and the storyline of the released version is pretty much as Wadleigh envisioned it. The only major difference—Becky Neff's role was pared down considerably.

The Poetry Corner

Night is here, as the full moon rises higher,
Now is the time for the wolfman and vampire.
Spooks and ghouls are on the prowl,
To do their deeds ever so foul.
In the morning light things will look brighter,
But for now, be careful, or you may not make
It through the night(er).

Ken Gilbert
90 Aborn Street
Peabody, MA 01960

Great Poem, Ken! Keep it up!

Carpenter Music

Dear Postal Zone:

. . . I beg to differ with John Carpenter's expression in Fangoria #14, that ". . . no American company has shown any interest in putting out a *Halloween* album." As the producer of some 15 Original Motion Picture Soundtrack albums for the Varese Sarabande label including Carpenter's *Dark Star*, and most recently *Escape From New York*, I remember well that on the occasion of a meeting with both John and Debra Hill to discuss a soundtrack album for *The Fog*, I had brought with me the Japanese album to *Halloween*. John expressed great surprise that an album deal had been made on this, and I advised him that we had unsuccessfully tried to negotiate a soundtrack deal with the film's producer, Irwin Yablans, who owns the licensing rights in the U.S. The hitch was Yablans' demand for an exorbitant amount as a cash advance to make the deal; an amount we felt we would never recoup from sales. Our proposal on *The Fog* likewise fell through when John Houseman's agent requested an extremely high "re-use" fee for the use of his client's voice as an introduction to the album. Both films' soundtracks I might note are musically short of the minimal need to produce a soundtrack album and would have had to been supplemented with dialogue and sound effects (such as had been done with our *Dark Star* and the Japanese *Halloween* albums).

As the article also states that Carpenter knows of no plans to put out a *Halloween 2* album, I might add that we are now in the *dialogue* stage of discussing just such a plan. Wish us luck. I have heard this score and it contains many of the key musical phrases from the original *Halloween*.

Scot W. Holton
20th Century Fox Publicity
Box 900
Beverly Hills, CA 90213

A Mystery Solved

Dear Friends,

. . . In reply to Brook Perry's letter in issue #13, I must point out that, while *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* did not contain the scenes Brook describes, one movie does contain all of them. I'm surprised that you did not mention it, as the scenes are from H.G. Lewis's film *Blood Feast*. Since it seems that Brook would like to see these scenes, the nearest super-8 film outlet is likely to have the trailer, which contains all of the scenes mentioned.

I just thought I would help a fellow Gore Movie fan out.

George Jones
221 East Will Rogers
Claremore, OK 74017

FANGORIA International

Dear Bob,

. . . Because of the success of the first television series, in England and abroad, Cinema Arts International/Hammer Films are going into production with not one, but two new series, *Hammer House of Horror Part Two* and *Hammer House of Mystery and Suspense*. Scripts for the new shows are now being submitted to the producers for possible films, beginning toward the end of 1981.

Keith Dudley
4, Sheriff Close
Prebendal Fare
Aylesbury, Bucks
England

Dear FANGORIA,

. . . Sometimes in Italy there are magazines about horror cinema, but these only live for a few months. The horror market here is not like in the U.S.A. Though we have some people with

The Postal Zone

very good special effects techniques, it is seldom that this type of movie has a good success.

I would like to know more about Wes Craven, the director of *Last House on the Left* and *The Hills Have Eyes*. I've only seen these two films by him. Are they the only two he made?

Graziano Valle
Via C. Salistri, 21
00157 Roma
Italy

Two other films by Craven are Summer of Fear *(or* Stranger in the House*), originally made for American TV, and* Deadly Blessing, *released in the U.S. in August. Future projects to be expected from Craven are* Swamp Thing *(see p.9),* Nightmare on Elma Street, *which he'll be shooting in Australia, and—possibly—*Marimba, *a film about the cocaine trade that would be made in South America.*

Dear FANGORIA,
. . . After years of non-stop sci-fi/horror publications, us horror/fantasy fans have been treated to your amazing magazine. Other fantasy publications include the odd article about horror films, but at last we have a full magazine all of our own! Unfortunately, we do not get FANGORIA here in Northern Ireland, but I make a habit of sending off to England for every issue.

Mervyn Johnston
20 Carmen Drive
Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim BT37 9DJ
Ireland

Dear FANGORIA,
. . . Your American readers wouldn't complain about U.S. censorship if they knew more about U.K. censors. Many PG-rated movies get X ratings (and it's not equivalent to your R—under 18's are not admitted)! *The Manitou, Frogs, Vampire Circus* and *Countess Dracula* are some examples.

How about an interview with Britain's Queen of Horror, Ingrid Pitt?

Andrew McVicar
26 Arisaig Dr.
Bearsden, Glasgow G61 2PD
Scotland

Dear Fang,
. . . I am one of the many English readers of your truly excellent mag, but unfortunately I missed some of the earlier issues. So, I would like to know, is there anywhere in England where I can get back issues? If I have to write to the states, it means changing money and expensive airmail charges.

Paul Hart
2, Lubbard's Close
Rayleigh, Essex SS6 9PY
England

Inquire at Forbidden Planet bookstore, 23 Denmark Street, London WC2H8NN, England. Tell 'em Fango sent you!

Dear FANGORIA,
. . . Certain people have written in asking you not to cover the quickly-made, badly acted horror films. This is so wrong. Your magazine is a 'horror film mag,' not a 'horror film mag (except for the bad ones).' No matter if a new release is fantastic or awful, it is still a horror film and has the right to be covered.

My second point is that some time ago someone wrote in saying 'go monthly.' Please, whatever you do, don't go monthly! It would totally ruin your mag. You wouldn't be able to get enough new information to fill the mag every month, and would have to fill it with old information that's been covered so many other times in so many other magazines.

Don't change your magazine in any way; I like it just the way it is.

Tobias Fouracre
Blackheath S.E. 3
London, England

Everything changes eventually, you know. And it is possible that we may increase our frequency just a little bit—to eight times a year—within the next year. I think there's a very good chance that you'll find us as loveable as ever.

Dear FANGORIA,
. . . You never print any correspondence from readers outside and U.S.A. and Canada—doesn't anybody get your magazine abroad or something?

Gavin Smith
84 Pattens Lane
Rochester, Kent
Great Britain

We've had a tremendous upswing in mail from abroad in recent months—apparently, FANGORIA is beginning to catch on with you decadent European intellectuals!

An Agreeable Guy

. . . I must confess that I agree with Mr. Glover (Postal Zone, #13) and his opinion on your "only praise" articles. Granted, it would not be polite in the course of an interview to speak badly of a person's movie, but let me direct you to *Cinefantastique* Vol. 5, #2. The magazine was granted interviews with *Logan's Run's* author, producers and director, and still gave a very much less than favorable review. Just because a project grants interviews with its filmmakers does not mean the interviewer must feel indebted and write a favorable review

Todd Bauer
2098 Danvill Drive
Cincinnati, OH 45238

Todd, since your letter is a lot more polite than Glover's, you certainly deserve a much more polite answer. We assure you that all the praise that has appeared in these pages has been heartfelt. Our reasons for not putting down the movies that we don't like are in this month's editorial. And if we ever devote half an issue to a movie as boring as Logan's Run, *we promise we'll also give it a bad review!*

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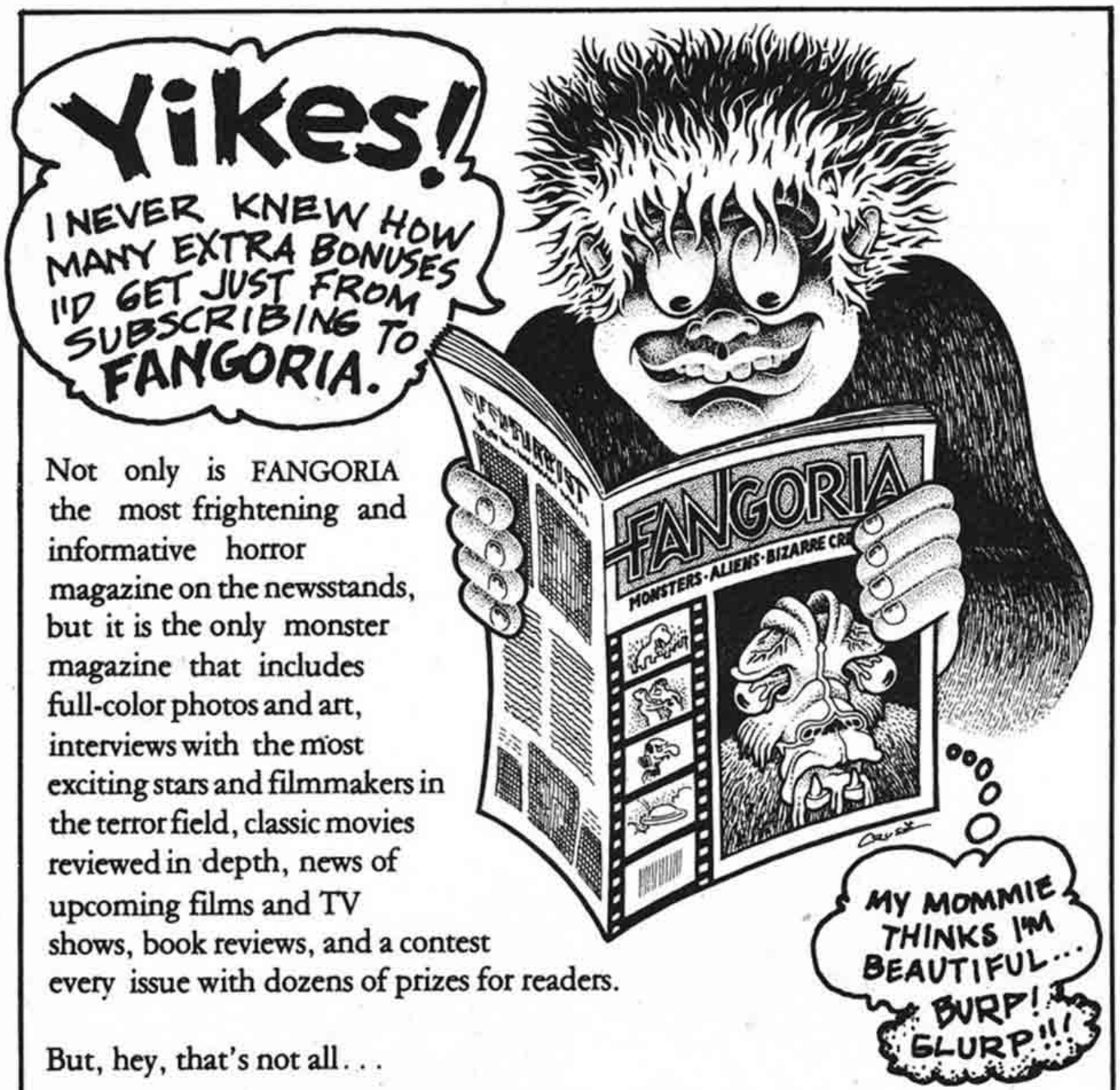
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A Family Matter

Dear FANGORIA Staff,

. . . In issue #13 you talked about *Deathdream*, and you made a mistake. My father Alan Ormsby did most of the makeup for the film and Tom Savini was his assistant.

I have read the script for *Cat People*, but I can't say much about it, except that it has one of the most spectacular transformations ever filmed! You're going to love it. Keep up the good work!

Ethan Ormsby
Sherman Oaks, CA

As long as people like your dad keep making great movies, we'll keep covering 'em! By the way, do you suppose you could mention to him that we'll need a cover photo in a couple of months . . . ?

Another slight error in that "4F" section—while Alan Ormsby did makeup, cowrote the script ,and acted in Children Shouldn't Play With Dead Things, *it was directed by Bob Clark, under the name of Ben Clark, not by Ormsby as stated. Thanks to Fred Olen Ray of Firebird International Pictures for that info, as well as the original working title* Deathdream—The Veteran, *which was dropped because of the massive release of Viet Nam POWs at the time of distribution.*

CAVALCADE OF CORRECTIONS!

Ray Harryhausen and all of his fans deserve our deepest apologies for the caption on page 50 of issue #14. We all know damn well that the Griffin and Centaur are from The Golden Voyage of Sinbad, *that the Harpies are from* Jason and the Argonauts, *and the Cyclops and skeleton are from* The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad!

In our Chris Walas interview, we said that Chris had worked with Tom St. Armand on the armatures for Dragonslayer. *Not so; Chris tells us that he mentioned Tom to be sure that he got mentioned in order to be sure his excellent work would be noted—Walas did not work directly with him.*

On page 65 of the same issue, in the Savini interview, ignore the first line that appears on the page. Things make perfect sense without it. Also, we neglected to credit Trevor Jeal for his photo of Caroline Munro on the set of The Last Horror Film, *nor did we credit Richard Wernig for his photos on the set of* The Burning *and, in issue #13, we omitted Peter Pautz's credit on his portrait of Charles Grant.*

Also in issue #13: In our George Romero interview, the phrase "getting back to the aspiring filmmakers," which appears in the middle of the second column on page 36, should have appeared at the top of the same column. A similar screw-up occurred in issue #12's Tobe Hooper interview—on page 40, the second line in the center column should have been the second-to-last line in the same column. In the same issue, page 65, that photo is from The Pit And The Pendulum, *not* The Tomb of Ligeia!

Not to mention an untold bounty of typographical errors . . . thanks to all of our loyal readers for your patience, and rest assured that our next line of improvement will be toward the elimination of such careless & needless errors.

On The Set

SWAMP THING

Part I—Mike Uslan

By BOB MARTIN

In 1969, at the age of 21, I started reading comic books again for the first time since I was 11, because of the work of two men. One of these was Neal Adams, whose work on *X-Men* that year (with the help of Roy Thomas' writing) convinced me that comic books could do everything that movies could do, and more—with a much smaller special effects budget. The other was Berni Wrightson, whose occasional contibutions to *House of Secrets* and *House of Mystery* seemed to wed elements of Art Nouveau to the grisly explorations of EC artist Graham Ingels without compromising either form, while remaining totally original.

The fact that something exciting was happening in comics during those years soon drew other talents like a magnet—Barry Windsor-Smith, Howard Chaykin, Michael Kaluta, Walt Simonson . . . there was always some small masterpiece of story and art somewhere on the comics rack in those days.

But after a few years, the excitement started to dissipate. Comics went to cheaper means of reproduction, so that even the best comic book art looked mediocre, and the artists either found better ways to make a living, or stopped trying so hard. The best writing talents stayed in comics, for the most part, but most seemed to lose their love affair with the comics even faster than I did, turning out formulized stories like so much processed cheese. By 1974, there was no longer any reason to even look at the comic book racks. But those few years had produced some of the greatest comics ever—Smith's *Conan*, Adams' *Green Lantern & Green Arrow*, Chaykin's *Fafhrd and Gray Mouser* from the Fritz Leiber stories, Ploog's *Werewolf by Night*, Kaluta's *The Shadow* . . . and Wrightson's *Swamp Thing*.

Swamp Thing first appeared in 1972, in DC Comics' mystery anthology *House of*

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Barbeau and Durock in a scene echoing Wrightson's cover art for *Swamp Thing* #3.

Avco's New President

Frank Capra, Jr.

One of the biggest surprises of our visit to the *Swamp Thing* set was our chance meeting with Frank Capra, Jr., the son of one of our all-time favorite directors and, at the time we met, the vice president in charge of production for Avco Embassy Pictures. Our meeting provided an excellent opportunity to chat with him about Avco's future; what we didn't know at the time was that, just a few weeks later, Capra would be appointed president of Avco Embassy Pictures, replacing Robert Rehme, who left that position recently to become president of marketing and distribution at Universal Studios.

PHOTO: COURTESY AVCO EMBASSY PICTURES

One of the reasons that Rehme was spirited away by Universal is Avco's remarkable growth-rate under the Rehme administration. When Rehme first came to Avco from New World Pictures just over two years ago, Avco was one of the larger small distributors. Though the company had financed some films in the early 70's, Avco had retreated from production as times grew less prosperous for the movie industry. When Rehme entered the scene, Avco's activities were confined solely to distribution of independently produced films, usually those that had been passed over by more influential distributors. Under Rehme, Avco re-entered the field of development and production, first by providing completion money to films like *Phantasm* and *Fear No Evil*, later edging into co-financed productions like *Hopscotch* and *The Howling*. This year, *Escape From New York* was the first film wholly developed, financed, filmed and distributed under the Avco banner—the end of the first phase in a campaign to add Avco Embassy to the ranks of the major studios.

Rehme will not be an easy act to follow, but Capra brings 25 years of experience in motion picture production to the job. As associate producer, he worked on the *Planet of the Apes* series, the SF thriller *Marooned* and Woody Allen's *Play it Again Sam*, and his credits as a producer include Joseph Wambaugh's *The Black Marble* and Chuck Norris's most enjoyable film to date, *An Eye For An Eye*.

"It's a matter of who we are now, and who we were," says Capra in discussing Avco's future. "We now have a very good relationship with the theater circuits than we had a short while ago. We play in better theaters than Universal, we play in better theaters than Disney, in better theaters than many of the majors. The only majors that are really tougher than us in terms of competition for the theaters are Paramount, Columbia and Warners. But we are right up there with all of them, and that's a tribute to Bob Rehme and the quality of the pictures that he's been able to get. And the theater owners know that we can come up behind that with another quality picture, and another. Now the theater owners listen. If we say we've got a good picture, they say, OK—bring it. That brings a tremendous advantage.

"And Rehme's done that entirely by his bootstraps, because the company has not had a whole lot of money. He's had to make all kinds of cofinancing deals, including *Swamp Thing* (co-financed by United Artists in exchange for foreign rights). We would have liked to have paid the whole picture, but we just did not have the investment money."

Rehme succeeded in bringing Avco to the threshold of major studio status: it is now Capra's job to help carry the company over that threshold. The next phase in Rehme's stated strategy for Avco was to be a partial turning away from the horror field, toward films like *Hopscotch*—the kind of films recognized by theater owners and the public as "Class A" productions.

"That doesn't mean that if Joe Dante comes to us with another *Howling* we'll turn that away, unless we have a full slate of horror films," Capra reassures us. "We highly value the sort of relationship we've been able to establish with young directors like Dante, Carpenter, and others. They provide us with films that we like, and we provide them with a place to make films with a certain amount of free-

(Continued on Page 64)

Secrets. One of several stories in that issue, it only spanned a few pages, but it stirred mountains of favorable mail, and made the book DC's biggest seller for the month. The story was a very basic tale of zombie revenge—except that the "zombie" in this instance rose from the swamp, not from the grave, and was composed of 1/3 human corpse, 2/3 rotted moss. The "swamp monster" angle wasn't exactly revolutionary either. Theodore Sturgeon planted the seed with his short story "It" in the early 1940's, a seed that first found fruit in a comic book series called *The Heap*, about a similarly rotty creature. That series lasted from 1942 until 1953, when the still popular character was retired upon the institution of the Comics Code.

Despite the popularity of the *Swamp Thing* one-shot, there was no immediate attempt to go to series, for a very simple reason. The Comics Code that had forced *The Heap's* retirement was still too restrictive to allow Swampie (as fans would later know him) as a continuing character. In 1972, however, the Comics Code was liberalized sufficiently to allow werewolves, vampires, and swamp monsters to return to the four-color page.

The first issue of *Swamp Thing* appeared in the summer of 1972, with story and art by the same team who had created Swampie two years before, writer Len Wein and artist Berni Wrightson. The story was a lengthened and revised retelling of the same one-shot story in *House of Secrets*. Dr. Alec Holland and his wife Linda are government scientists working on a 'bio-restorative' formula, capable of turning deserts into fertile fields, in a secret laboratory hidden deep in the swamps. However, a mysterious group known as The Conclave wants the formula—when they fail to obtain it, they plant a bomb in the Holland's laboratory. Doused with the formula and afire, Alec Holland runs from the lab and into the swamp, seemingly to his death. But Holland survives; not as a man, but as the combination of flesh and muck known as the Swamp Thing.

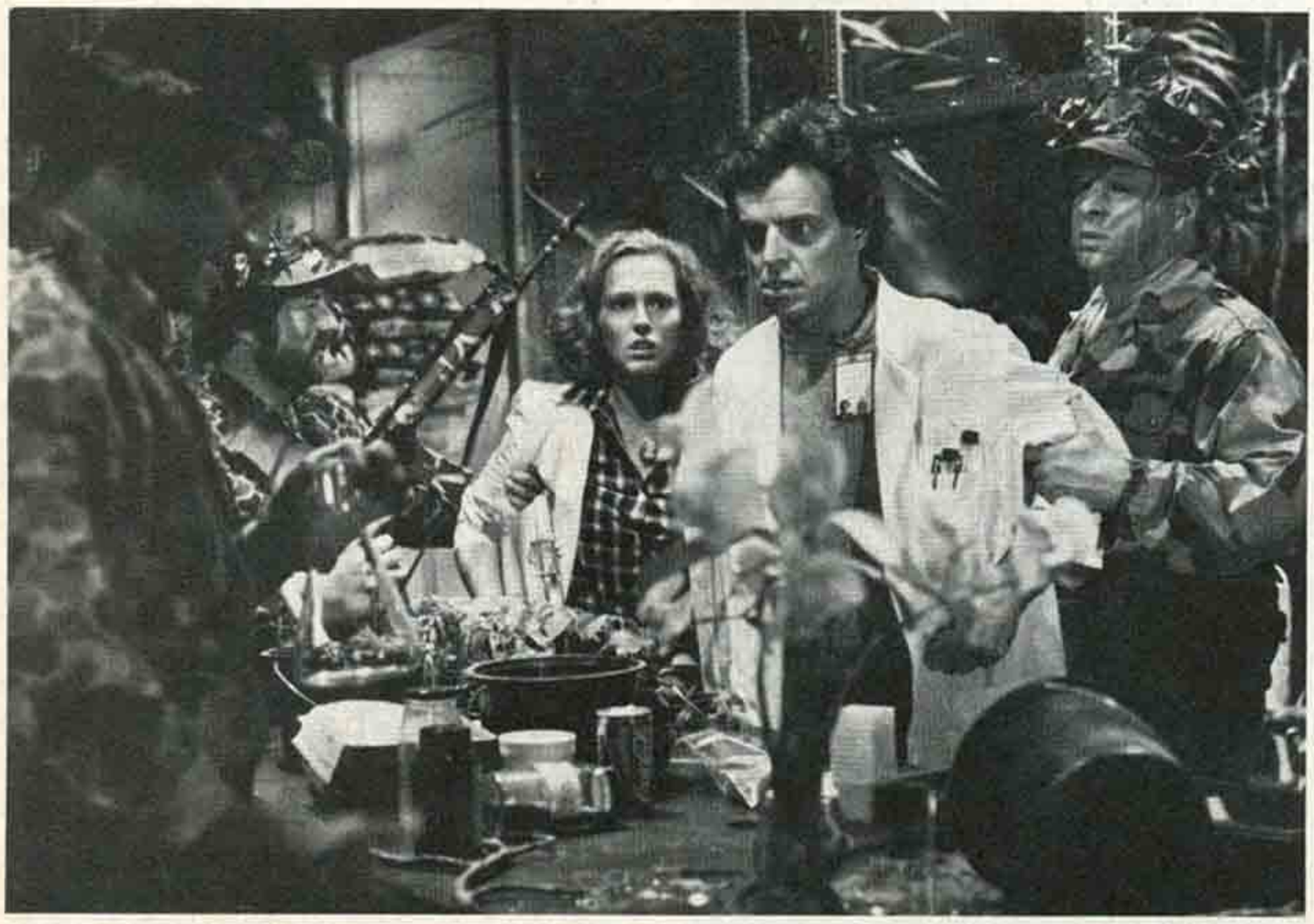
Wein and Wrightson remained Swampie's biographers through the first 10 issues of the short-lived series—the definitive *Swamp Thing* saga. Now, almost 10 years later, *Swamp Thing* lives again, in a film directed by Wes Craven and starring Adrienne Barbeau. We were fortunate to be invited to Charleston, South Carolina this summer where the film was shot on location. The scenes shot during our stay were all interiors, the early scenes in Doctor Holland's laboratory, so we never got a chance to visit a swamp, or to see stunt actor Dick Durock in full Swamp Thing regalia. But the people we spoke to on the set buoyed our confidence that *Swamp Thing* the movie will be up to the high standards set by the team that created the comic.

The originator of the whole project is Mike Uslan, who is coproducing with former MGM vice-president Ben Melnicker. When we got a chance to speak

Swamp Thing held captive by Arcane in the film , and in the comic's second issue.

with Uslan shortly after our arrival, he identified himself as "one of the original comic books fans. I remember going to the very first comic book convention in New York in this fleabag hotel called the Broadway Central." Like many comic fans of the 60's, his first love was for the DC superhero stable, though, with the publication of the first *X-Men* comic in 1963, he "discovered" the Marvel Universe. And, should anyone ever tell you that comic collecting is a worthless endeavor, you can tell them that Mike Uslan paid most of his way through law school by selling his collection, which at the time included 25,000 books, dating as far back as 1936.

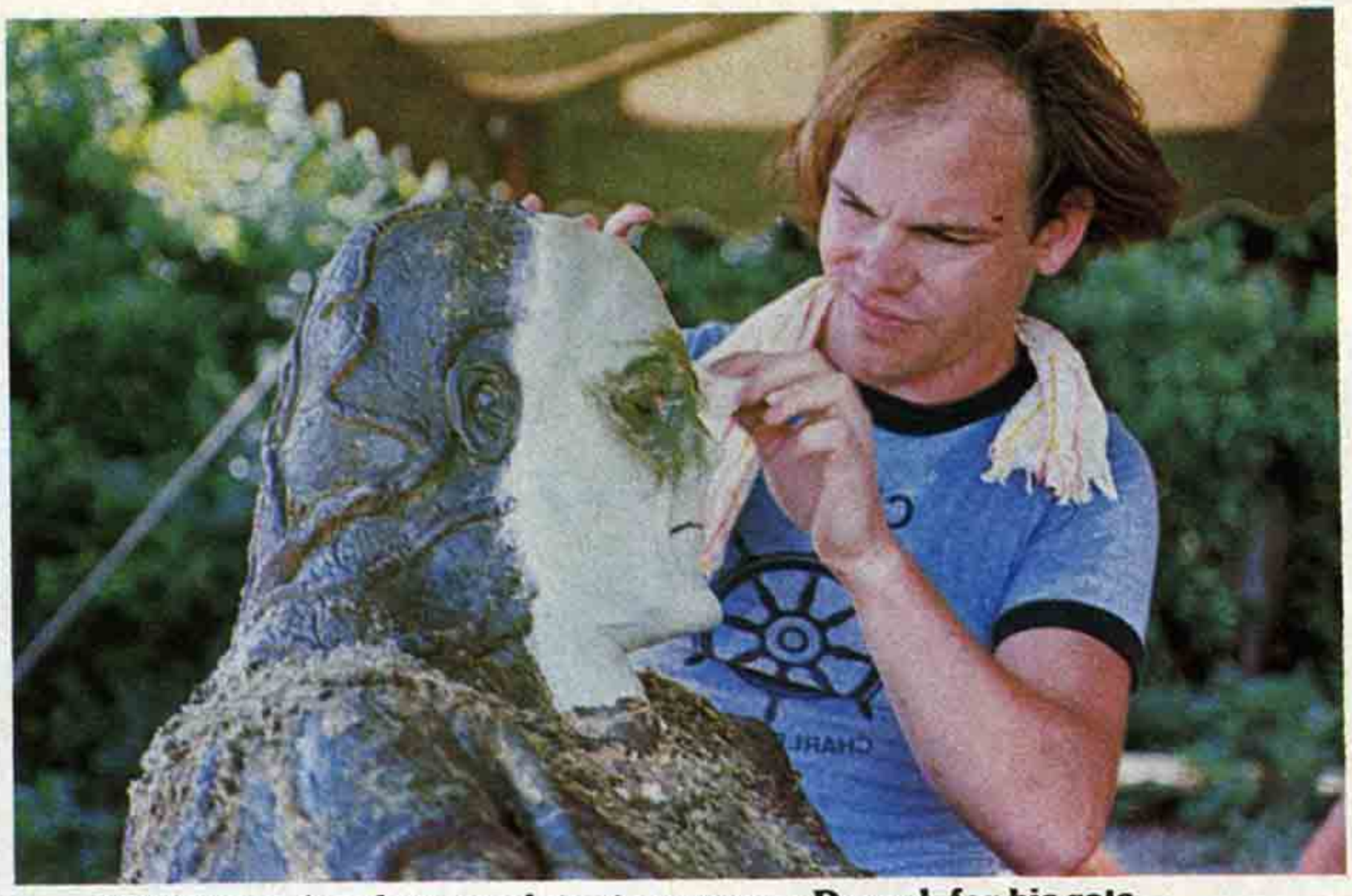
In 1971, Uslan taught the first accredited college course in comics, at Indiana University. A lot of media attention was drawn by the course, because comic books really could be taken seriously in those days, and Uslan started giving guest lectures and set up courses at 80 different colleges and high schools in the U.S. "DC heard about all this, and brought me into New York for two purposes. One was to try to set their comics into college bookstores, and the other was in the development of educational comics. I worked very closely with Sol Harrison, a terrifically creative individual who probably knows more about comics than any other individual."



Alec Holland (Ray Wise) held captive in his lab by David Hess (left, of *Last House on the Left*) and Nicholas Worth (right, of *Don't Answer the Phone*).

Uslan maintained his teaching position at Indiana University while attending law school and continuing his work for DC during the summers. But he still wasn't busy enough, and soon started writing for DC as well. "The writing started when *The Shadow* series was cancelled, and got a last-minute reprieve," Uslan recalls. "The book was suddenly very late, and the series editor, Denny O'Neil, needed a story overnight. I told him about an idea I had about the Shadow at Niagara Falls, and he said that if I could bring in the script the next day, they might be able to use it. It became *Shadow* #9, and subsequently I did a couple more *Shadows*, some *Batman*, *Beowulf*, some mystery stories, and *The Question* for Charlton."

Uslan retired from the comics scene about five years ago, upon his graduation from law school, and took a position in the legal department of United Artists, the



One of Bill Munns' makeup assistants prepares Durock for his role.

only major film studio that still administers most of its business from the East Coast. unfortunately, that seems likely to change in the near future, since UA was recently purchased outright by MGM, and is expected to be absorbed wholesale by its new parent company. During his time with the studio, Uslan was placed in charge of the legal affairs of several pictures, including *Rocky II* and Raging Bull, which gave him a first-hand view of the negotiations and contractual commitments involved in bringing an idea to the screen. After four years with UA, Uslan formed a partnership with Ben Melnicker for the express purpose of producing *Swamp Thing* and *Batman* in their own motion pictures.

"Ben Melnicker was the executive vice-president of MGM for a great many years," says Uslan. "He was pretty much running the studio during the years of *Ben Hur*, the great musicals of th 50's, and *Dr. Zhivago*. He left MGM in the early 70's, when they radically reduced the number of pictures they produced per year and moved westward. He stayed in New York, produced a couple of films and made financial arrangements for a couple of others. A couple of years ago there was a very unusual situation surrounding *Winter Kills*, the first time a movie ever went into chapter 11 (bankruptcy proceedings). Halfway through the picture, all the money arrangements fell apart. The people involved, having nothing else to do, turned to Ben. And Ben, also for the first time ever, brought a picture out of chapter 11, reorganized it financially, brought the original cast and crew back together, and got the film finished. That was when I started noticing Ben's name in *Variety*, and decided that this was the man who could help me get the *Batman* movie made."

Though Uslan's big-budget plans for *Batman* were foremost in his mind when the partnership was formed, *Swamp Thing*, the less elaborate project is the first to go before the cameras, and for a very good reason. "*Swamp Thing* is a comparatively small-budget film," says Uslan, "but we have special effects, special makeup design, child actors—you name it, we had it, the toughest logistical problems you're going to find on any kind of film. For me, it's terrific preparation for *Batman*—how to handle things and do it economically for the maximum amount of production value."

At this point, Chuck Jones (not the animator, but Avco Embassy's New York publicity man) arrived to tell the members of the press that our coach was waiting to whisk us off to the set. Along for the ride were several of our companions from *The Beast Within* set (see issue #13), including Jim Verniere of the *Aquarian Weekly* and Tom Seligson, on assignment from *Twilight Zone* magazine. The brief trip to the set gave us our first close-up look at Charleston, perhaps the most beautiful town we'd ever seen. Its primarily wooden architecture has been preserved and restored faithfully for generations, including many buildings that have remained unchanged since the early 19th century. We were told that the interior of one of these buildings, the very impressive Hibernian Hall, would be used as the mansion of Arcane, the sinister leader of The Conclave, played by Louis Jourdan.

The soundstage was a disused warehouse, and the set was a small shack in the center of it that, to my memory, looked exactly like the shack that concealed the laboratory of Dr. Alec Holland in *Swamp Thing* #1. Needless to say, surrounding the shack were tons of equipment—lights, sound mixers, lots of safety equipment for an upcoming fire stunt, and what seemed to be miles of cable. Add to this perhaps three dozen crew members moving about to accomplish their assigned tasks, and you'll have an idea of how things looked to a stranger—confusing.

If the exterior of the set was crowded, the interior was more so. Inside the shack were several large tables, some holding your typical mad-lab equipment: vials, retorts and flasks containing multi-colored, flourescent liquids, bunsen burners, tongs and testube racks. There were also several small computers—Radio Shack Model 3's, mostly, which I immediately recognized, since I do all my writing on the cheaper RS model 1 equipped with a word processing program. In addition, there was a nice big 35mm camera, the director, six actors, and an equal number of crew people crammed into very tight quarters. With all this going on, you might understand that it wasn't easy figuring out where we were supposed to stand. Fortunately, unit publicist Mike Klastoran saw our plight and guided us to a spot where we could get a fair view of what was going on and not get in the way.

As it happened, an assistant director thought we were in the wrong place, and ordered us to move in a fairly nasty manner. We moved. Then the production manager came over and, quite nicely, asked us to move back to where we were. I pointed out that the a.d. had "called us jerks" for standing there in the first place. The a.d. didn't like that—in fact, he hadn't actually used the word "jerk," except in his tone—and, for a second, I thought he was going to slug me, but saner heads intervened before I antagonized him any further. Too bad; it would have been quite a story, especially since the guy had been none other than Todd Corman, guess-who's nephew.

Anyway, with that settled, I found I still couldn't see much of anything. The guy in front of me, however, described the scene being shot. Louis Jourdan as Arcane and Ray Wise as Alec Holland struggle over the notebooks containing the formula. In the struggle, a flask of the bio-restoractive formula splashes onto Holland. I did catch a few glimpses of Jourdan, however, and I could hear his voice. I received the impression that Jourdan's Arcane is a man of serpentine evil; lean and always dressed in black, mesmerizing in appearance and in voice. I was straining to hear the lines that he breathed, in a soft voice that seemed akin to a hiss, when the struggle began and was interruped by an unscheduled crash, and a hubbub of concern. Some of the "formula" (actually water mixed with a flourescent chemical) had splashed into Wise's eye. Due to extreme eye pain, Wise was unable to continue with the scene. Once all were assured that Wise was all right, the crew began to prepare a different set-up, the stunt scene in which Holland, aflame, rushes out of the shack and into the surrounding bog.

The press retired to an informal lounge that had been set up near the front of the builidng—and there was none other than Adrienne Barbeau.

Next Issue: Our 3-part coverage of Swamp Thing *continues with our on-the-set interview with Fantasy Film Femme Fatale Adrienne Barbeau!*

The Burman Studio
Part Two

Tom Burman concludes our visit with him by discussing his current work on The Beast Within *and* The Cat People!

By ELLEN CARLOMAGNO

Perhaps Tom Burman's most important participation to date has been on United Artists' *The Beast Within*, which stars Paul Clemens. Burman becomes quote excited when he speaks of this project, because he feels it has all the elements necessary to make it a super hit. "This is a transformation picture," smiles Burman, "but not like *The Howling*. It's only similar in that the changes occur on screen before your eyes. It's what the title suggests—something coming from within." Burman worked closely with Academy Award winning director Philippe Mora to bring some of the most staggering and gut-wrenching effects that have ever been done on the screen.

As explained in Bob Martin's article (FANGORIA #13), *The Beast Within* is the story of what occurs as the result of a woman having been raped by "something unknown." It takes place 17 years after the unfortunate incident, when the child produced by the rape is nearing his birthday. He is mysteriously drawn to the place of his conception, and is, at the same time, undergoing a bizzare transformation into something grotesque and frightening—of decidedly insect origins—that goes around killing people. The poor chap goes through seven or eight different stages before the beast of the title emerges, leaving behind mere shells of his former self.

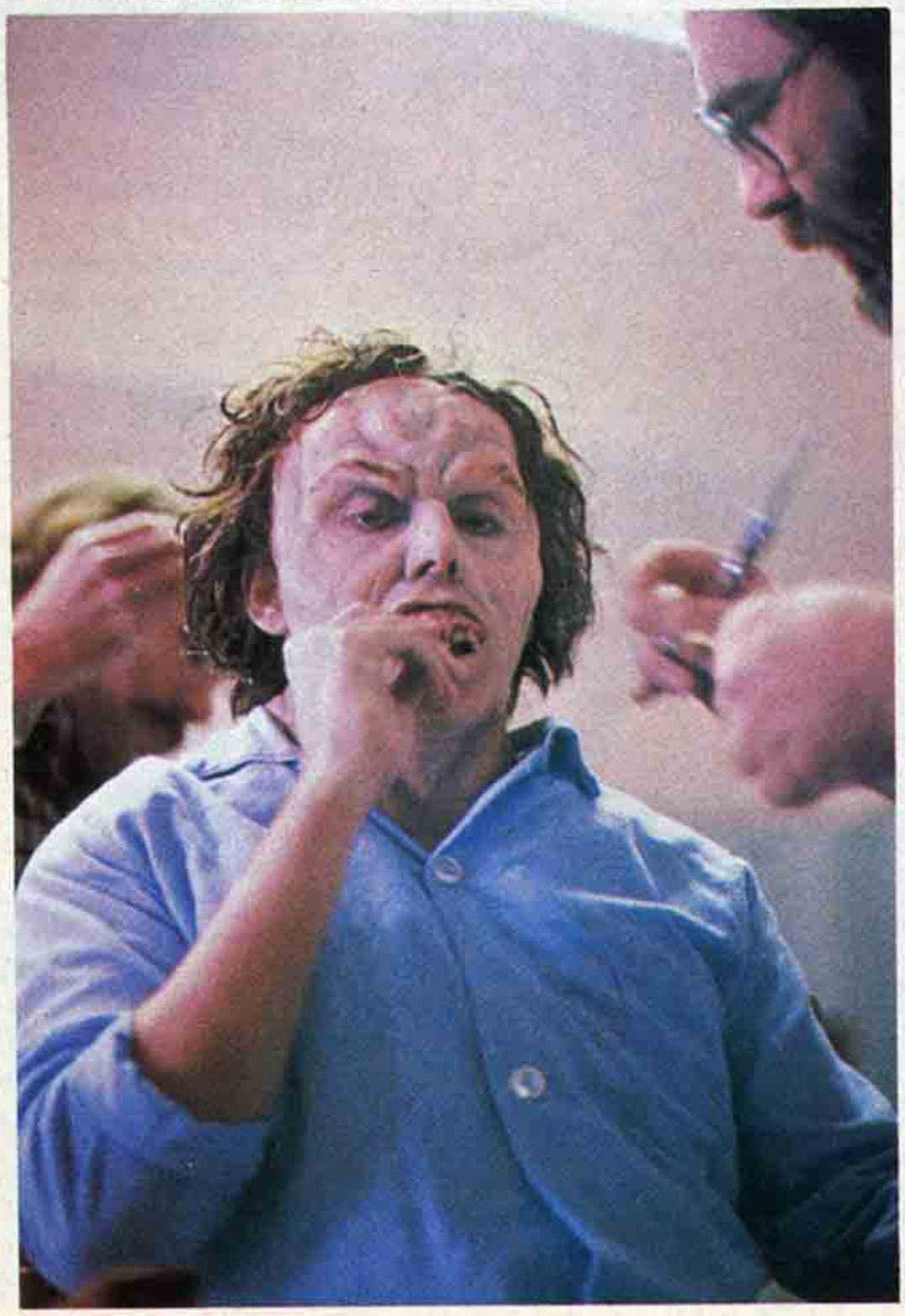
Paul Clemens (long a *Fango* fan) portrays the boy/beast, and Burman lauds the young man's performance. "Paul did the best job of playing a monster, I think, that I've ever seen anything like that played. He gave it a theatrical quality much like that of Lon Chaney's performances." Indeed, the entire production was well-acted, according to Burman.

Due to the shroud of secrecy around this movie's spectacular effects, there were no photos available for publication. But, Burman offers this shot-by-shot description of one of the (many) transformation scenes: Michael (the "afflicted" fellow in the story) is suffering inexplicably from malnutrition, and appears to be dying. In the first shot, Clemens was made up (quite convincingly) to make his normally cherubic face look gaunt. In shot #2, we see that there is something else very, very wrong with the boy. His face is changing ("plumpers", small rubber dental implants between the cheek and gums, were employed to give Clemens' face a slightly distorted look), and the skin on his back is splitting open (achieved with foam latex prosthetic appliances enhanced with make-up and Methycel, a slimy goo widely used in the industry for just such purposes). In shot #3, his face is even more distorted—new teeth, more and different appliances give the effect. Shot #4 is an insert of a fully articulated fake head (from a mold of Clemens' face) with air bladders beneath the rubber skin, and other dis-

ALL PHOTOS: COURTESY TOM BURMAN

Burman and buddy—Carnie's decapitation wasn't done with mirrors after all!

A laundromat patron finds that his load is still a little moist in *My Bloody Valentine*.



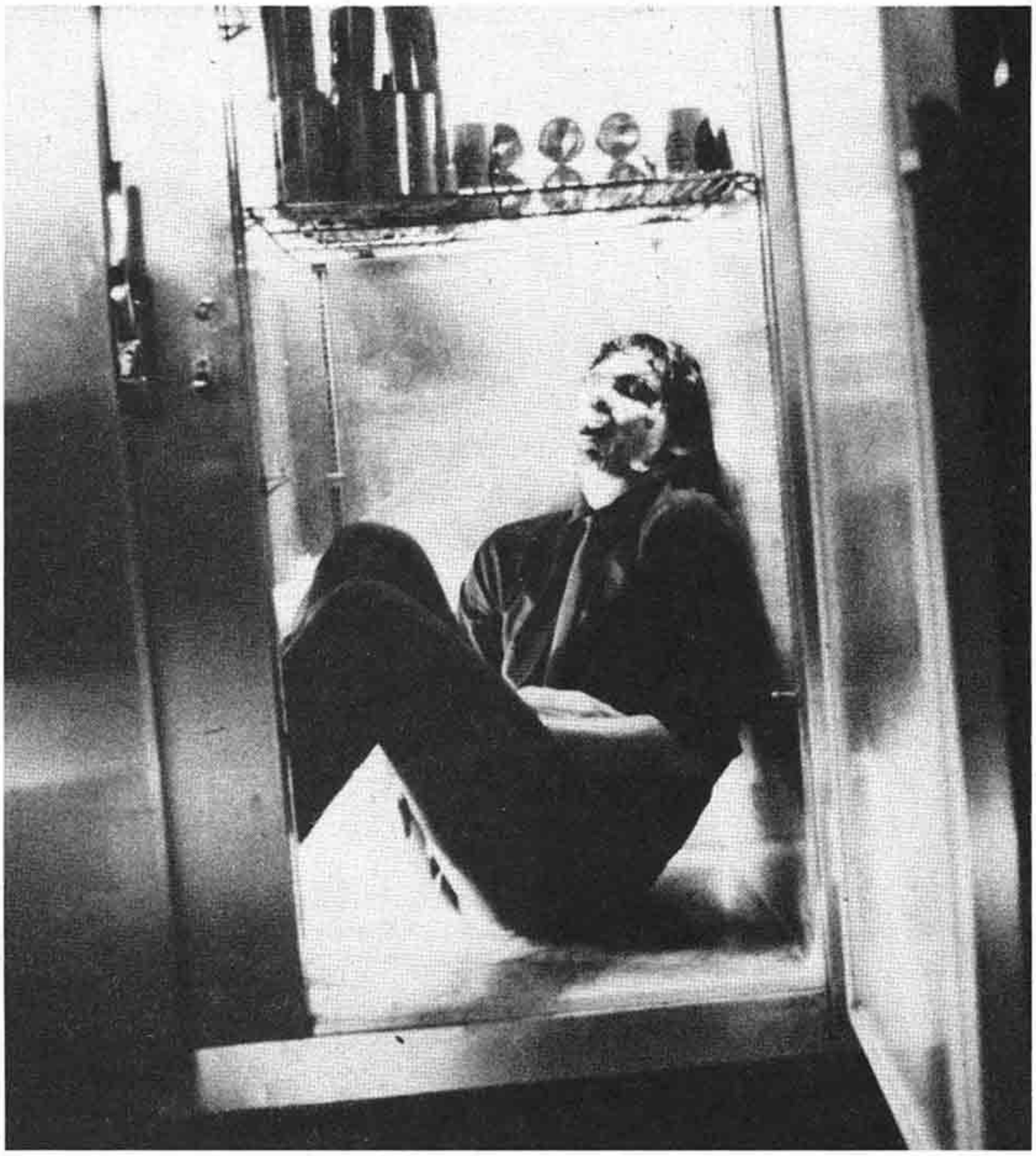
***The Beast Within:* Clements in an early stage; and Tom Hoerber prepares Logan Ramsey for his bloody demise.**

gusting embellishments which suggest something attempting to break out. Shot #5 is of Clemens' own face. Prosthetics with air bladders were applied to show the animation of the character's rapidly swelling face (lots of goo, too). Shot #6 is of his back splitting open and oozing all over. Shot #7 is the head insert again, only the air bladders are allowed to burst, creating a skin-splitting effect on the face. The final shot of the scene is of Clemens, his body nearly (not completely, there's a few stages to go, folks!) transformed, his face splitting open revealing something hideous beneath; and with hands that resemble nothing human. "We tried not to make it a lengthy demonstration of state-of-the-art effects, but rather to tie the whole thing together so that it progresses without distraction," Burman explains.

"An interesting aspect of doing this movie," says Burman, "was working with a woman. A very talented young lady, Bari Dreiband, worked with me on the design, and it was interesting to get the female point of view on this sort of thing—which is an altogether different angle, and is sometimes even more frightening than the way a man would see it; and she sort of kept it from going overboard," Burman smiles (Dreiband is a sculptor and artist at the Burman Studio). "Her input helped the beast to be more psychologically frightening than physically so."

Currently, Burman has just finished work on a film that has given him a creative challenge similar to that of *The Beast Within*. Universal's *Cat People* is another 'transformation picture,' but less severe than *Beast* or *Howling*. "We want to do it in a very classical, beautiful way," Burman says. The film stars Malcom McDowall, Natassia Kinski, and John Heard, and is being directed by Paul Schrader. "Paul is very receptive—easy to talk to, and open to suggestions," smiles Tom. "He's a very nice man, and I think we'll be able to do some nice things with this."

The Cat People is an adaptation of the 1942 film *Cat People*, and is set in South America and the United States. Explains Burman, "it's similar in story to *The Beast Within* in that they both deal with tribal lore, of one kind or another, that comes to life." The lore in *The Cat People* has to do with the ritualistic sacrificing of human offspring to the neighborhood predatory felines in a remote village in the South American jungle, where the natives worship the animals. Pretty soon the magic runs amok, and in an almost demonic manner, the people become possessed by this tribal mysticism, and start turning into cats—and vice versa; and (of course) all the while needing human flesh to survive. The story concerns a pair of children—now grown and living in the USA—whose parents, we find out, were missionaries who ended up killing themselves because they had become enveloped in the tribal magic, and knew they had no control over it. They spared their children, and that's where it all begins.



Just when you thought it was safe to open the fridge—*My Bloody Valentine.*

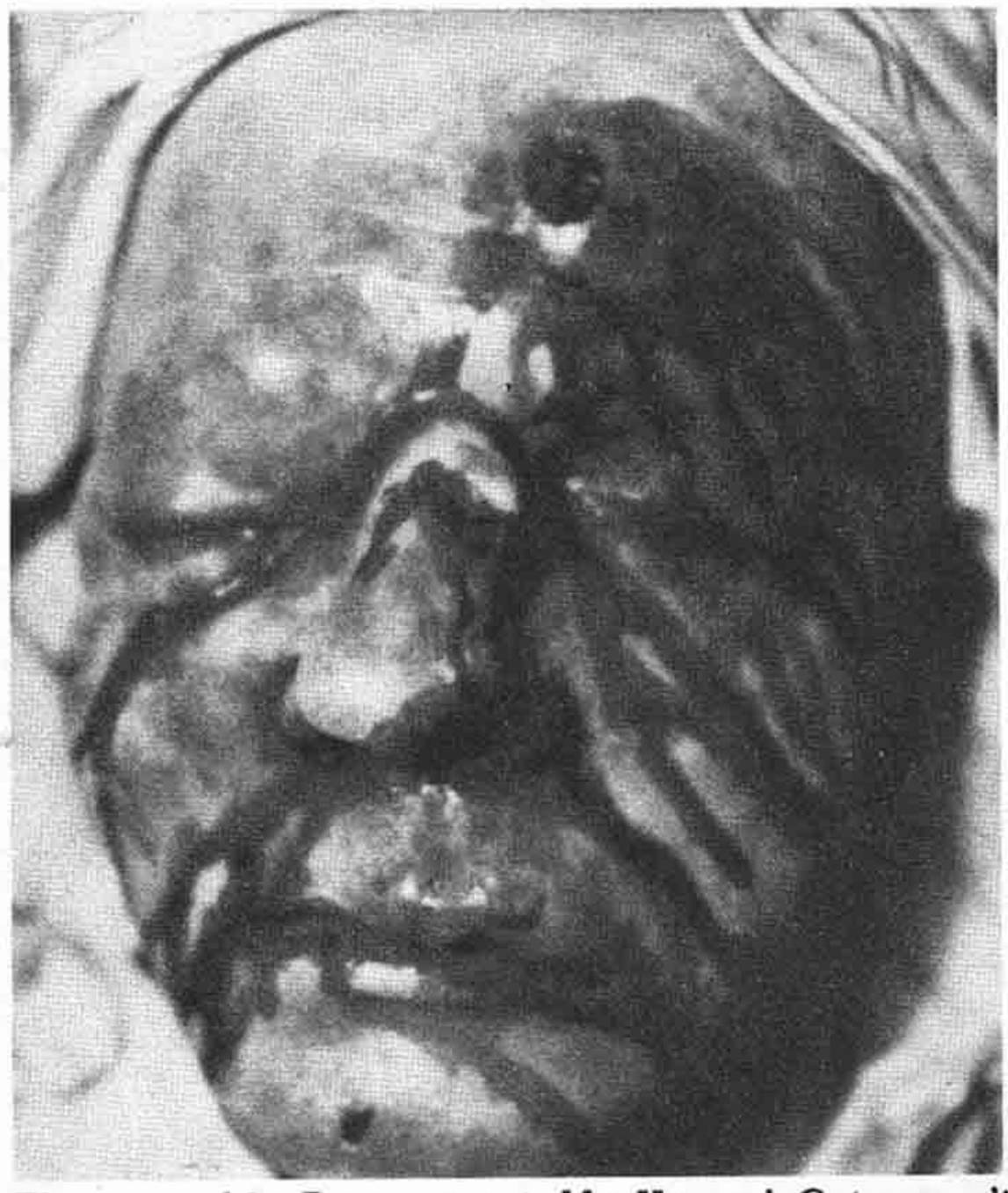
Real cats will be used in the movie, but panthers seem to have nasty reputations for mauling not only the hand that feeds them, but often the arm and shoulder too. Hence, the actors will not do close-ups with the real kitties, but instead be seen with a mechanical animal so real-looking and life-like, as to steal the show from the live cats. Burman's brother Ellis designed the completely articulated cat, and a close friend and ingenious machinist, Allen Hall, built the armature for the beast.

The fur that covers the cat is something of a brilliant device by Tom. A fur with a stretchy backing was needed to cover the cat, so when it moved, the "skin" would give with the movements, much like real skin does. Unfortunately, nothing remotely similar to this stretch-fur existed—that is, until Tom invented it. He imported from Germany synthetic "Fun-Fur" (Tom hates the name), and shaved the hairs from the fabric backing in one large, uniform patch, rolling them up so they would stay together. He then brushed a thin coat of smooth-on, a polyurethane rubber, onto a surface that it would not stick to, and rolled the shaved hairs out onto it; creating, when the rubber dried, a durable, stretchy backing for the fur. The result is a life-like coat with "skin" underneath that stretches in accordance with any movement that the understructure may make.

Burman hopes to do something quite different with the transformations in *The Cat People*. "As I said, we want this to be classical, not jolting." Tom goes on, "for instance, Natassia Kinski is very beautiful—so is the cat she becomes, so it would be terribly distracting if the change was as abrupt as in *Howling* or *Beast Within*." In the attempt to make such unique transformations, the now standard state-of-the-art special make-up effects techniques will be used. "Dick Smith did something for *Altered States* that was very successful, and that everybody seems to be talking about," says Burman. "Well, we want to take that another step further—as Dick Smith would take it a step further—that's the kind of competition we all enjoy."

Universal's *The Cat People* wrapped up its shooting in July, with an April, 1982 release date. Just how Burman and his crew intend to take modern make-up effects "another step further" will remain to us a mystery until then.

Burman's list of credits (and non-credits) includes, obviously, almost exclusively graphic displays of violence (or the victims thereof). He admits that he really doesn't enjoy watching the sort of film that is filled with graphic repulsion, and that he does those kinds of effects for reasons other than seeing the final print. "There is, of course, the creative aspect; the challenge



These casualties Burman created for *Heaven's Gate* weren't included in the final release. However, they are very likely to appear in *The Johnson County Wars*, a western being assembled from *Heaven's Gate* out-takes!

of the design," Burman explains, "but basically, it's just business. People know I can deliver what they want, and are willing to pay for it. I enjoy horror and fright, but not the heavy-handed use of gore for gore's sake. *Halloween* was an excellent picture; the film's a classic—and there was no gore. Most of the time, the effects are in a picture to hold up a weak script, as in *Friday the 13th*. If I was to do a horror film of my own, I would make sure I wouldnt have to fall back on gore to get an audience. There are other things that can make a movie entertaining," he maintains.

When asked the standard question "Why do you think people go to see movies depicting graphic violence and gore?", Burman gave (what seems to be) the standard answer: "People want to test themselves," he says, "like in *Jaws*, for instance, you test yourself against a fear—maybe of sharks, or of water, or whatever—at a safe distance. Also," he adds, "it's seeing what you're curious about. There's not a person alive who doesn't have in them some degree of morbid curiosity."

The censorship boards are beginning, it seems, to have a larger effect on films that include graphic violence and its results. A movie that Burman did some extremely vivid effects for, *My Bloody Valentine*, had been considerably toned down, and many of the nastier scenes (described in detail in FANGORIA #11) had been so truncated as to destroy their impact. Knowing his feelings on gore, it seemed relevant to consider Burman's thoughts on censorship. "It's wrong to cut up films like that," he begins, shaking his head, "at least not for the reasons that most of them are cut. The only reason *Valentine* was cut, was for sales purposes. The censorship people had little to do with it. The distributor is the one who pulls those strings. They may have balked at the blood and made them take it out. That kind of thing is a compromise between the distributor and the production company—often at the expense of the film—for money." As for the other reasons for censoring violence, Burman shrugs, "I'm not against graphic gore if it's done in good taste." If that is the case, Burman feels, then there is no need for censorship.

Burman's agenda is full these days, and on that agenda is a project he has been wanting to do for some length of time now. Ironically, it has little to do with make-up and special make-up effects. The project is a screenplay that Burman has written, and he's now more confident than ever that it will be produced. The story, called *Footsteps*, involves a young boy who has inherited his father's enthusiasm for motorcycle racing. Not too surprisingly, Burman would like to direct the picture, which will attempt to depict, along the same lines as Caroll Ballard's *The Black Stallion*, the boy's involvement with motorcycles and motorcross racing. "People were really pulling for that kid and his horse, regardless of whether they liked horses or not," says Burman. "I want to try and create that same kind of feeling in *Footsteps*." With all he has learned from the directors he has worked with, Burman most certainly should be able to bring it off.

As for future make-up effects projects, Burman and his brother plan to help fill a need in TV and movie production: they want to design and manufacture articulated, life-like dummies of every body-type imaginable. On a rental basis, they would loan them out to the various production units whose scripts call for things stuntmen can't do "without a replacement stuntman," he jokes. "Directors would love them. They would be able to shoot an entire scene of a character jumping off a building or cliff from the start of the fall to the impact, all in one shot; and because the dummy would have the same weight distribution as a real person, and radio controlled joints, it wouldn't flop around like the K-pock dummies they use now." The possibilities for Burman's stunt-dummies are limitless. They could be employed for those more outrageous stunts, such as diving from San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, without experiencing so much as a water-logged transistor—and at a fraction of the cost of having a real live stuntperson risk (and in one instance *lose*) his life in the attempt. Molded from a cast of the actor they would replace, they would add such realism as to make one think the actor had actually done the stunt. "Realism in films is important," says Burman, "and our dummies can lend a lot to that."

One might say that Burman's whole career has centered on the ability to make things look "real." His creations, from the incidental noses and ears, to giant rats and slimy things that go bump in the night—many of them done on a moment's notice—have shocked and entertained us with their realism over the years. Hopefully Burman will continue to churn out such wonders in the years to come.

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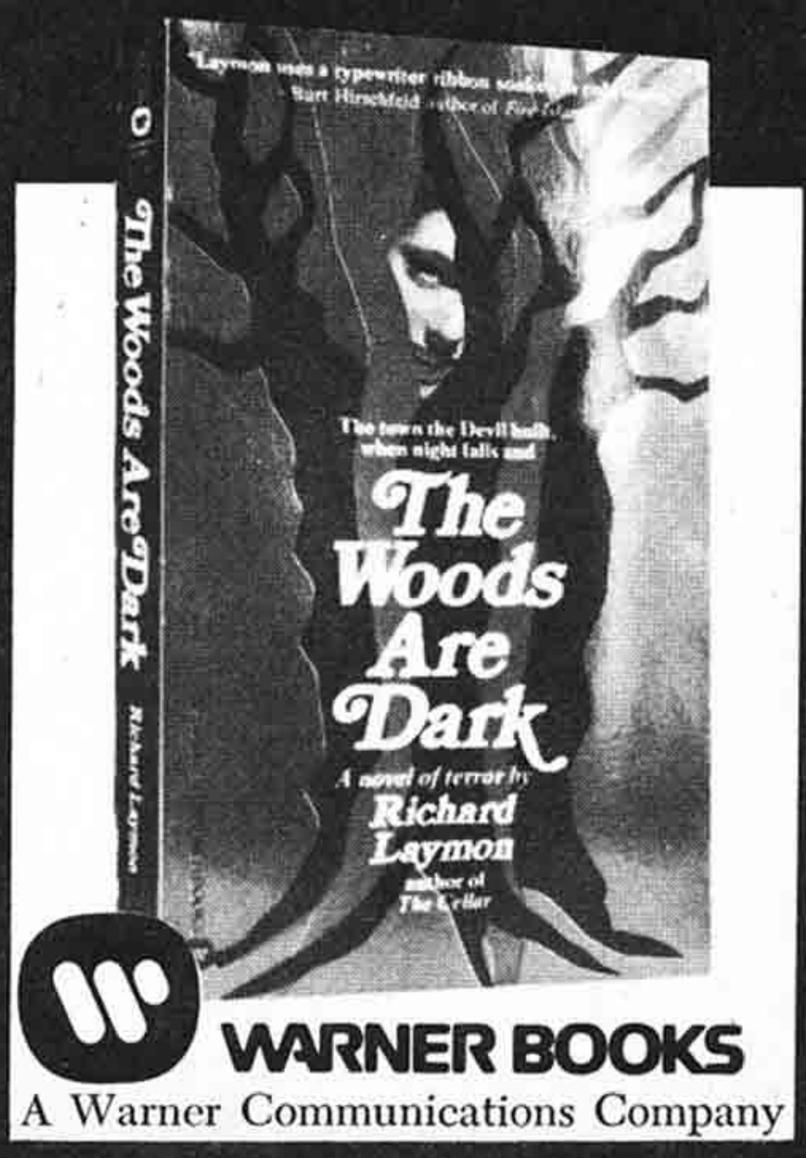

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PHOTO: KIM GOTTLIEB

Debra Hill

A chat on present and future projects with the producer of Halloween II.

By BOB MARTIN

New York's apartment rentals and the baseness of its slums seem to be growing at an equal rate, making it a less hospitable place for its residents with evey passing year. And yet, luxury hotels seem to be cropping up like mushrooms. Sadly, it seems that the old saying will soon be unwritten law: New York—a place where you can visit, but there's no place where anyone can live.

One of these new Manhattan hotels was the locale for our interview with Debra Hill, the producer and cowriter of *Escape from New York*. Rather apppropriately, the hotel was still in the process of being built—when we entered the lobby, the scattering of rubble and plywood amid the marbled and mirrored exterior suggested a movie set—perhaps that of the World Trade Center in 1999.

But we hadn't arrived to speak of *Escape*. Just a few months after *Escape*'s release would come another Hill film that we were even more interested in—*Halloween II*. When we arrived at Hill's hotel suite, we were greeted by Catherine Olim, one of the most charming of the charming people we know in public relations. Upon meeting Hill, we were struck by the fact that she is still more attractive in person than she is in her photographs—an effect that we later decided was due to an irresistable combination of intellect and personal warmth that no photograph could fully convey.

Hill, like many of her male counterparts in the film business, started in film during her childhood, with an 8mm camera, "doing very simple films," she recalls. "Little stick-figure animations, some other things. One of those films I still have is a film about the birth of our puppies—I wanted to show the reaction of my mother, the reaction of my father, the reaction of the dog. . . It was awhile before I began to realize that there are visual processes of storytelling. John [Carpenter] and I have found in working together that the more visually-oriented a script is, the least amount of exposition there is, the better that works for us. We really enjoy doing fantasy films, entertainment films."

At least part of Hill's view of film's chief purpose as entertainment is her life-long passion for the films of Frank Capra—the first film she recalls seeing in her childhood is Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life*. *Harvey*, another Jimmy Stewart movie in Capra's "screwball comedy" genre, though directed by Herbert Koster, sufficiently impressed the young Hill that she adopted her own imaginary playmate, patterned after the seven-foot rabbit of the film, which she dubbed "Sam."

"I had quite an imagination," Hill recalls. "My mother would get frightened, wondering whether I was seeing something that wasn't there. 'Don't sit there—Sam's sitting there,' I would say, or the door would blow open. . . 'Here comes Sam.' When I was playing, I could imagine armies of people—cowboys and Indians, or whatever."

Hill was able to tell Frank Capra of her admiration for his work in 1978 at the Utah Film Festival—Hill was present for a showing of *Halloween*, and Capra attended a retrospective held in his honor that year. Since then, Hill's found great pleasure in working with the two succeeding generations of filmmaking Capras—Frank Capra, Jr., who recently succeeded Bob Rehme as president of Avco Embassy Pictures, and Frank Capra III, assistant location manager on *Escape from New York*. We mentioned our conversation with Capra, Jr. on the *Swamp Thing* set (see page 10), and Hill further enlightened us on future relations between Hill, Carpenter and Avco. Hill certainly does want to work with Avco again, and the properties now under consideration include a possible sequel to *Escape*, and a film version of Stephen King's recent novel *Firestarter*.

It was at this point that the telephone in Hill's suite rang—a business call that briefly interrupted our talk.

"We've edited it," Hill was saying to the caller. "You don't see a joint anywhere in the scene . . . yes, you know they're smoking something, but it could just as easily be a cigaret. . ." This conversation lasted a few seconds more; when Hill hung up, her displeasure with the caller was evident.

"I hate censorship, in any form," Hill said to us after completing the call, which had concerned NBC's "broadcasting standards" people, and the forthcoming broadcast of *Halloween*. "I feel that if you read a book and it offends you, you close it; if you turn the TV on and it offends you, you turn it off; if you go to a movie and it offends you, you leave the theater.

"First they told us what had to go, which was everything, and I wrote them back, telling them this was ridiculous. We finally

PHOTO: KIM GOTTLIEB • 1981 DINO DE LAURENTIIS

Rick Rosenthal and crew prepare a scene for *Halloween II*.

agreed that we'd all sit together and go over everything, bit by bit. Barry Girardi and myself went in for a meeting, and it was like two completely different schools of thought. Instead of fighting them on it, we went in with a sense of humor—kidded with them so they could see how silly they were to be asking what they were asking. Eventually, it just came down to some minor things that really don't change the movie very much. It doesn't quite have the 'oomph,' but it still has the roller coaster ride. And the additional footage should have been in there in the first place—it integrated very well."

The additional footage Hill refers to consists of 11 additional minutes added to the re-cut *Halloween* to compensate for what was lost to censorship. The new footage written by Hill and Carpenter and directed by Carpenter in a three-day schedule, serves to tie the original film more securely to the events that take place in the sequel. "It also helps it make more sense," says Hill. "We filled in the time between the first pre-credit killing and when he makes the break-out.

"We showed them our new cut yesterday, and there was only one slight problem, which pleased everyone a great deal. They actually put two things back in that they had originally requested cut, because they realized it was needed."

With the new *Halloween* completed, that leads us to the sequel; like the first film, the story is simplicity itself. Again, the film begins with the exterior of the Doyle House, the camera moving into the room where we last left Laurie and Loomis. Again we see the six gunshots; again we see Michael fall from the window. Loomis runs out, and finds Michael's blood on the grass, but Michael is gone.

Laurie is taken to a hospital and sedated; eventually Michael turns up there as well, but he's not looking for treatment.

Hill says that the hospital will be the

(Continued on Page 46)

PHOTO: KIM GOTTLIEB © 1981 AVCO EMBASSY PICTURES

Carpenter and co. provide the musical accompaniment for the transvestite troupe in *Escape From New York*.

Jamie Lee Curtis

In her final encounter—only this time, the maniac is carrying a tape recorder!

By BOB MARTIN

PHOTOS: JOHN CLAYTON

"Who is this guy, anyway?" Curtis asks her off-camera companion.

In the course of conducting dozens of interviews for FANGORIA over the last two years, we've discovered one truism: that the most talented people, who are always the busiest and the hardest to get hold of, are invariably the kindest, the most generous, and the easiest to speak with.

Jamie Lee Curtis is no exception to this rule. We've been trying to arrange a session with her for over a year, with little success. The same period has seen the release of her features *The Fog, Prom Night, Terror Train* and *Road Games,* as well as television appearances on *Saturday Night Live* and in the TV movie *You're In The Army Now.* In just the past few months, she repeated the role of Laurie Strode in *Halloween II,* co-hosted a *Guinness Book of World Records* TV special with David Frost, and starred in the NBC-TV film *Death of a Centerfold,* playing the late Dorothy Stratten.

After months of non-stop work, Curtis was en route to a hideaway in the Hamptons for a long-delayed rest, when she stopped in Manhattan for a battery of interviews with such prestigious publications as *Rolling Stone* and FANGORIA. Because so many East Coast journalists were anxious to speak with Curtis, our own time was necessarily limited; nevertheless, we managed to at least touch upon all of her feature film roles.

We met Curtis in the lobby of the Berkshire Place Hotel in Manhattan. In person, she is taller and bustier than those who know her best as Laurie Strode might expect, and her manner is lively and outgoing. In fact, it seems rather hard to imagine her being intimidated by anyone—even a knife-wielding maniac. Her hair remains the light blonde color that was required for the Stratten role; as one result, she more sharply resembles her mother, actress Janet Leigh, particularly when she purses her lips in vexation.

She was in something of a giddy mood—swooping like a mock airlane as she crossed the lobby to meet us and, later, gushing like a fan when she recognized 13-year-old pop singer Stacey Lattislaw, who was also being interviewed at the Berkshire. When we commented on her new hair color, she said, "Isn't it an amazing transformation? It's like *The Howling;* that's why I look like a werewolf this morning." In fact, we found her lovelier in person than she is in her films—we were particularly impressed by the graceful arch of her eyebrows that give her gaze a special intensity.

With our first questions, we learned that Jamie Curtis (for that is the name she went by as a child) had a fairly normal childhood, considering, of course, that she was the offspring of two "movie stars" in the old Hollywood sense, Tony Curtis and Janet Leigh. The first movie she remembers seeing is *Oliver!,* especially the scene where Oliver Reed strangles Shani Wallis ("I remember her legs twitched, and my mother grabbed me and tried to cover my eyes; I kept going, 'No, I want to see . . .' "), and the first movies that actually scared her were *The Deadly Mantis* and *The Naked Prey* ("Hundreds of millions of killer ants marching . . . and they're on a raft and the guy gets 'em in his hair . . . scared the hell out of me."). She never went through a phase of adolescent rebellion, and, early in her adolescence, had a crush on David Cassidy ("Don't forget—this was the 70's. It's not *my* fault we didn't have Elvis or the Beatles.").

Though her mother was never anxious to see Curtis become a performer, little Jamie started performing early in life. Janet Leigh was involved in a charity that mounted stage shows annually, and Leigh

kept a costume closet in the basement for that purpose. After marvelling at the contents of the closet on several occasions ("It had everything—a tiger suit, sailor suits, period costumes, hula skirts—it was great."), Curtis and her friends started staging neighborhood productions.

When Curtis reached college age, she was still not certain what career lay ahead of her; criminal law and psychology were two fields that interested her, but she never developed a real passion for either. Then, one winter term, she proposed to do a field study on "breaking into show business," as an independent study course. The study, which was only supposed to last a single month, led to an entire career.

FANGORIA: Since you've done both televison and theatrical film, can you tell us how the two differ?

JAMIE LEE CURTIS: Not much, actually. The acting doesn't differ, though you may be able to get away with something a little bit broader on the small screen. But any serious work for TV . . . for instance, I made a *movie* on Dorothy Stratten, I didn't make a television movie. The only difference would be the cameraman, who has to remember he's shooting a differently shaped frame.

You may have less time with television, but, except for *Road Games*, I have not worked on a film over 23, 25 days—most of them 20 days. *Road Games*, because of the difficulties of shooting a road picture, took considerably longer.

FANG: How did you come to be involved in *Halloween?*

CURTIS: I simply auditioned for John Carpenter and Debra Hill.

FANG: Was there any discussion of the role, or of the movie?

CURTIS: No, I just met 'em, shook hands—"Hi, hi." "What have you done?" "*Operation Petticoat* for a year." "Would you like to read the scene?" "Yes, please"—read the scene—"Thank you, thank you for coming in." "Thank you."

FANG: You knew *Halloween* was a low-budget film, to be shot rather quickly; what were your expectations?

CURTIS: I was told that this was a horror film, that it did have a go-ahead, that the budget was $300,000. And it was a director that was very hot in Europe, but nobody knew him here. That was my information.

I personally never felt that the movie was going to be "it." I mean, how could anybody have had any idea? So many people are now saying, "I knew," a lot of people taking credit for John's success. But how could anyone know?

But I was thrilled to have the movie, thrilled to have all those words, and thrilled to play a character like that. I mean, I wouldn't have cast myself as Laurie—I wear tight jeans, have a low voice and big tits. Of course, when I went in for that audition, I wore an old-fashioned dress and no makeup.

FANG: In *Halloween*, virtually all the other characters played pretty much a single note, while your role called for some range. Was Carpenter's attention particularly focused on your performance?

CURTIS: John doesn't laboriously work with actors; he hires you for a part he thinks you can do and lets you do. We talked about her vulnerability; and he told me that he wanted the audience to talk to her out loud during the movie—which I thought was completely weird, but sure enough they did. So we talked about it. But it was never a matter of daily hammering it out.

FANG: Were there any scenes in *Halloween* that were particularly tough for you—that you had to push to get?

CURTIS: The running and the screams are fairly easy; though there's one Panaglide shot where I run out into the city street, and I couldn't go completely wild, because I had to hit my marks, keeping pace with the camera, and there were people watching me. There's always people watching you, but in the city street at 10 o'clock, running out screaming, "help, help, help," you can't help but feel like an asshole, and I couldn't ask, "Can you clear the streets for me?", though I could now. I have asked for sets to be cleared. It's not a prima donna-ish thing, it's not to be rude. It's only to make the performance better.

Also there was the scene where I saw

A hospital corridor offers no escape as Laurie approaches the final confrontation in *Halloween II*.

Annie [Nancy Loomis] dead. John said to me, "Jamie, I don't know exactly what to do with this scene. I've got to get you opening the door, walking over here, and seeing her there. Then I need you to somehow get from here to that door . . ." where I turn around and the guy swings down.

I figured that, when shock hits you, it hits you sort of like a wave, pushing you. Like, if you walked into a room on fire, the waves of the heat and flame pushing you back. So we decided that if it would push me back, that, with the shock, I'd be pushed into the corner.

It was also tough because there was no body, no bed there, just a camera. I had to walk to X, look, imagine my best friend with her throat slit, not realize it for a second, then see it, and have that shock throw me into a corner, quiver there for a minute, turn on cue, and then be confronted by this maniac.

FANG: In that instance, would you think of a particular best friend of yours?

CURTIS: Yeah. My momma.

FANG: This may strike you as a weird question . . .

CURTIS: Great!

FANG: . . . but there are times that I've spilled red ink on my hands, and felt a sense of panic . . .

CURTIS: *Marnie*! A great movie.

FANG: Yes, *Marnie*. Anyway, I know it's red ink, but there's a part of me that believes in appearances, believes it's blood. When you're wearing a makeup wound, do you ever have to remind yourself that it's makeup?

CURTIS: No, never. It stinks, it smells like molasses, it's sticky, it dries and gets brittle. You move a muscle and it pulls on your skin.

FANG: There's such an undercurrent of humor in Carpenter's films, people suppose there's a lot of playfulness on the set.

CURTIS: Yes, there is. And I must tell you the truth, sometimes it drives me crazy.

John Carpenter shoots a movie faster than anyone I've ever seen. And he's now got a group of people who all know what their jobs are, and get things done so quickly. Everybody's called into work at 7 a.m., you don't rehearse, you go straight into makeup. John walks onto the set and says, "Let's set the camera up over here," and he just shoots it—he doesn't do any extra coverage. He really knows his movie; he'll stop you in the middle of a closeup, saying "OK, that's enough."

I like to slow down sometimes, which means I would just like to stop. For other people, it's playfulness, and some of that gets annoying. But I'd rather have playfulness that's annoying than have people walking around very somberly all the time.

FANG: Your second feature film was your second with Carpenter—*The Fog*. Liz Solley was a much tougher person than Laurie.

CURTIS: I hated my performance in *The Fog*.

FANG: Why?

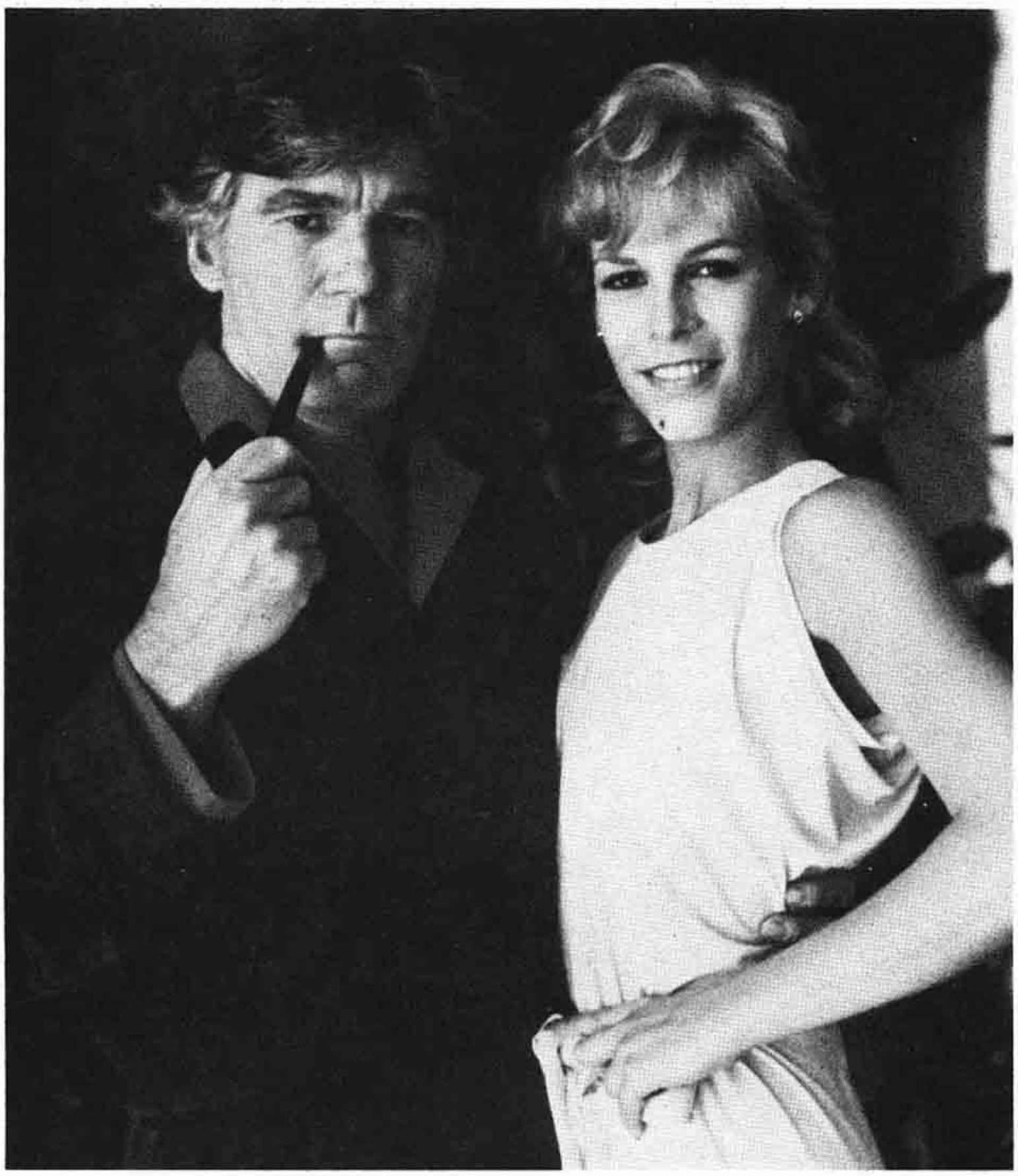

PHOTO: NBC-TV

Curtis as Stratten in *Death of a Centerfold*, with Mitchell Ryan as "Hef."

CURTIS: I just hated it. I thought it was terrible.

FANG: I did think that you did a very similiar character a lot better in *Road Games*.

CURTIS: I agree 100%. The thing is, I tend to put myself down all the time, and my friends point out to me that you can only be a little bit better than what you're given. You can't turn shit into gold. Maybe gold plate . . .

MICK GARRIS: Chocolate.

CURTIS: Right, Chocolate . . . maybe chocolate, but not gold. The only lines about my character were put in at my insistance—"Pasadena, a lot of money, and not knowing what I want to do"—that line was my entire character.

FANG: Working with the chemical fog must have made that pretty unpleasant at times.

CURTIS: The kicker fog machines were great—the mechanical ones that look like a big tube—they just shoot it out. But the petroleum ones, and the ones that burn charcoal and incense—those are just incredible. I'm just waiting for them to come out and declare them carcinogenic.

There was one great scene in there where we're driving in a truck and the fog comes at us . . . you know about that one?

FANG: Where they reversed the film? Yeah, Carpenter talked about that (issue #5).

CURTIS: Right—that was all my driving.

FANG: I didn't realize that.

CURTIS: At first they were going to do it the real way, but it just wouldn't work. It was too windy, and the fog would blow away. So they decided to reverse it, so the wall of fog just sort of materializes out of nowhere—the reverse of the wind blowing it away. They weren't going to let me do it, but they did let me. First, they filled the whole area with fog, and then started blowing it away. When it had reached about 20 feet I had to drive up sort of crooked, as if I was backing away from this wall of fog, catch the fog as it's going away, stop . . . wait for it to move away another 20, then back straight out, so it would look like I was driving in. And I did it; "Stunt" Curtis.

FANG: Tell me, "Stunt," how did you come to be involved in *Prom Night*?

CURTIS: *Disco Death— Ho! Hunh!*

FANG: That was an alternate title?

CURTIS: That's my title for it. But, y'see—I'm doing it again. At times, when I talk about my horror movies, I start getting a little negative about them.

FANG: That's OK.

CURTIS: No, it's not, because I don't

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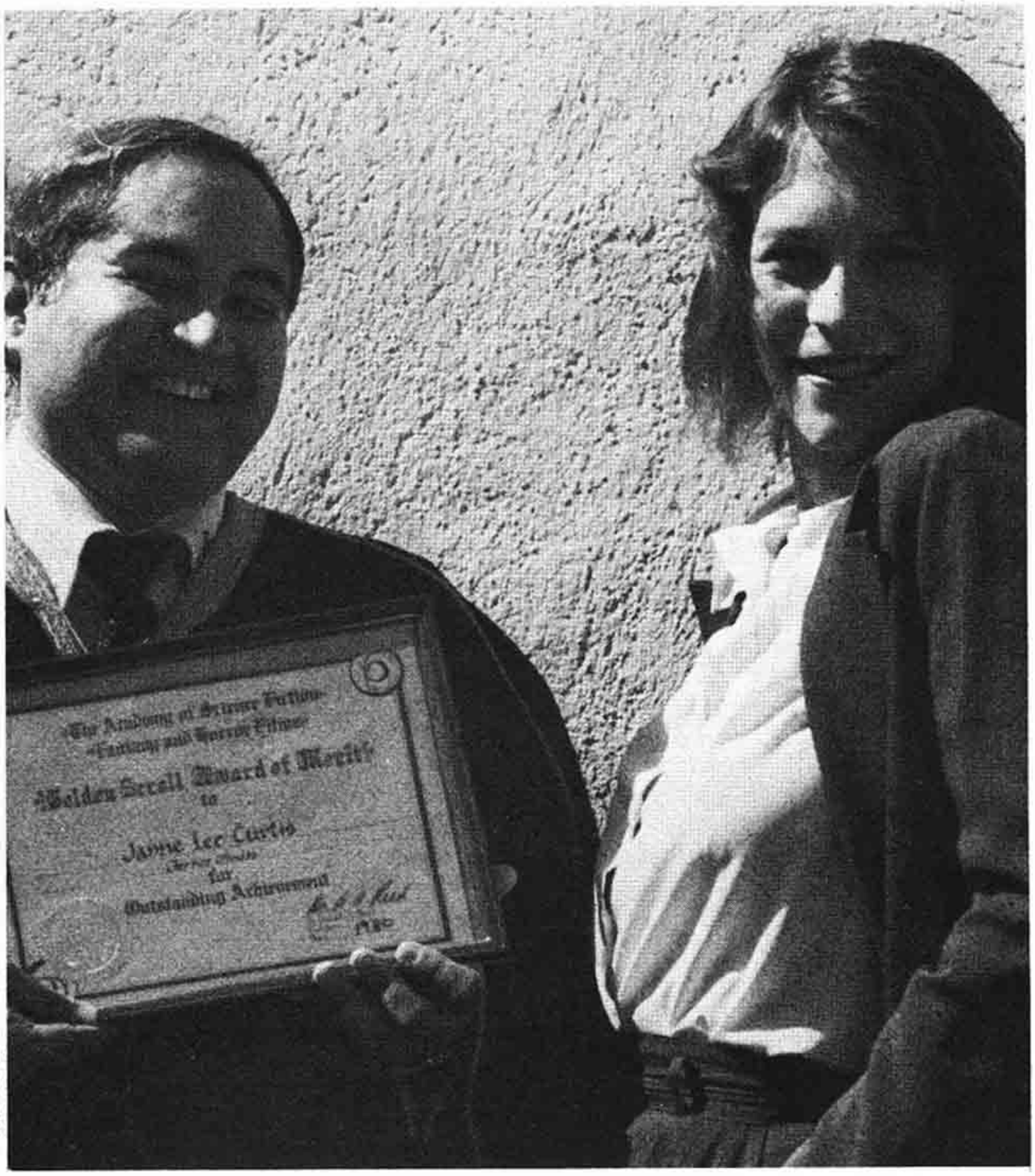


PHOTO: COURTESY DONALD A. REED

Dr. Donald Reed bestows SF Academy honors on Curtis for *Terror Train*.

want people to think I don't like 'em, or make it sound like I didn't like doing them, or that it was an awful experience all the time. I owe them all a lot, and I'm very proud to have participated in them.

But there are some problems that I find interesting, that I think other people will find interesting, about certain movies, so I wind up talking about them.

FANG: Well, if it makes you feel any better, *Prom Night* was the only one of your movies that I actively disliked.

CURTIS: Well, I hated *Prom Night*. I shouldn't say that.

FANG: How did you get involved?

CURTIS: It was a role that was offered to me; the first role that I was ever offered.

FANG: Did they know what an asset you were at the time?

CURTIS: I think they probably did, but I didn't think they did at the time. I didn't think I was an asset at the time. *The Fog* I considered a gift; *Halloween*, I never understood why I got that, until later. When you doubt yourself as I did, you never understand why people hire you. I practically would have paid to make that movie—I had only made two movies up to that time, they offered me three times the money I was paid on *The Fog*, and it was the first role that was actually offered to me; I didn't even have to read for it. And they said, "How would you like to spend six weeks in Toronto?" To me, little insecure Jamie, the idea of making a movie was so exciting, I just went, "*sigh*"

And, I'll let you know something, all that psychopathic killer stuff was not in the original script, not in the script I agreed to do. They added that after they cut the movie. I'm very angry about that, and I'll always be angry about that because I feel I wouldn't have made the movie had it been a remake of *Halloween*—which is exactly what they were trying to do.

FANG: On the other hand, I thought *Terror Train* handled the "returned killer" thing pretty well—they kept you guessing.

CURTIS: *Terror Train* was OK . . .

FAN: They did *Dressed To Kill* a lot better than Brian de Palma ever did.

CURTIS: That female thing was real good, and they did keep you waiting until the very end.

FANG: And it had Ben Johnson—need we say more?

CURTIS: Oh, I love Ben Johnson. And that set was beautiful; that train. It was a hard movie to make.

FANG: I can imagine—all those narrow sets. How much of it was shot on a train?

CURTIS: All of it. It was all shot on a practical train, a lot of night shooting, and (cinematographer) John Alcott used all the practical lights, rewired all the lighting in the train; because there was no way we could bring in big globes. Every light on the train was rigged on a dimmer—Alcott had a guy sitting at the controls all night, and when the set-up changed, he'd look at his grid, see which lights were involved, and talk through the radio, "'ey, Eve, Eve, 'ello darlin'—Alroit—bring up numbah fawteen through 20, bring 'em up to 50." And, magically, the lights would come up, Instant lighting. I called it radio lighting.

FANG: It was a beautifully shot picture. Now, *Road Games*. A very interesting movie. Why so long before it's released?

CURTIS: It's been out.

FANG: Not in New York.

GARRIS: It opened in L.A. six months ago.

PHOTO: KIM GOTTLIEB © 1980 AVCO EMBASSY PICTURES

Curtis and Charles Cyphers are spooked by the uncanny events in *The Fog*.

FANG: Six months ago? Didn't do much, eh?
CURTIS: It did nothin'. Neither did *Terror Train;* it wasn't at all a big money maker.
FANG: And yet *Prom Night,* which was garbage, did well. That's weird . . . Anyway, in *Road Games,* you didn't scream once.
CURTIS: Hold on . . .
FANG: You didn't . . . when the guy grabbed you in the van, you just sort of caught your breath . . .
CURTIS: Hold on . . . you're right, I didn't scream.
FANG: That must have been refreshing. How was working with Stacey Keach?
CURTIS: I learned a lot about location living from Stacey. Stacey Keach has been on the road for about three years—he hadn't been at his home for more than three weeks in more than a year at the time. He was in London doing a play, then in New York doing a play, then to Australia, then to Cannes, then Australia again, then to Hungary and now he's touring the play *Barnum* all across the country. He and his new wife Jill have clothes for every climate you can imagine, 'cause when you travel around, you never know what you're going to hit. They have rugs, candles, pictures, ashtrays . . . and it's not so hard to pack that stuff into a couple of trunks. The first thing Jill does when she gets to a place is go and buy fresh flowers. You go into their place five minutes after they've arrived, and they've unpacked that stuff and made it look like home.
FANG: I'd read, shortly after *Road Games,* that you were to be married in June. Then you didn't; why not?
CURTIS: Because I didn't think I was ready to.
FANG: It can take a lot of nerve to cancel a wedding like that, given people's expectations.
CURTIS: Exactly. People were amazed that I did it. I still have talks with some of my friends where they'll say, "I can't believe it—I could never do that . . ." What I can't believe is that someone would go through with a marriage that they weren't ready for, just so they wouldn't have a hassle. Life is full of hassles—so you call people, "I'm sorry, I decided not to get married."
FANG: You should have done the reasonable thing—gotten married and had a divorce.
CURTIS: Right, like everybody else.
DIVORCEE GARRIS: Like me!
FANG: Right, like Mick. Anyway, how did you feel about becoming involved in *Halloween II?*
CURTIS: I didn't necessarily want to make the movie. Not necessarily because it was *Halloween II,* but because I didn't want to make another horror movie. I had said after *Road Games* that it was the beginning of my non-horror future. But then I realized that I have a terrible loyalty to John and Debra—who am I to say no to them when they gave me a career? And also to the audience; most of all to the audience. Since it takes up directly from where the first one ends, the audience has the right to see the same person in the same role. If a new girl played Laurie, you'd feel real funny, and that was the biggest bond—to the audience.

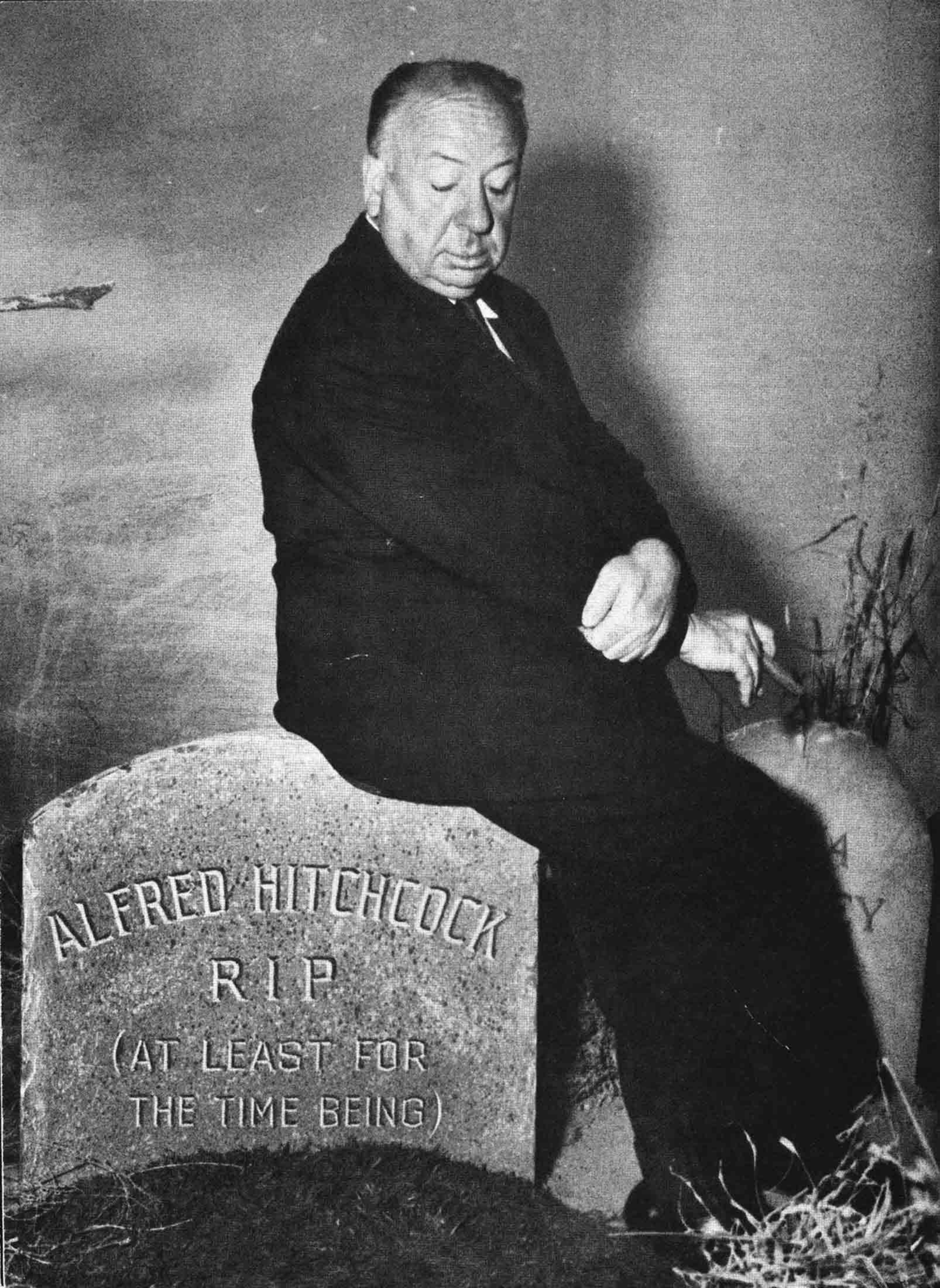
PHOTO: KIM GOTTLIEB © 1980 AVCO EMBASSY PICTURES
Curtis' famous Mom, Janet Leigh, joined the cast of *The Fog*.

And I am happy I did it; don't get me wrong. I was a little disappointed in my lack of participation, after agreeing to do it.
FANG: Laurie is drugged or injured through most of the film, which would really limit the role.
CURTIS: Uh-huh. I have about 10 lines in the entire film. I really wish I could have been in the film more.

I don't like being drugged for half the movie—I think it's just a waste of a wonderful character. In the first movie, she talked. And, for *Halloween II,* I even got them to move back the drugging halfway; I used to get drugged as soon as I got to the hospital.

But it's very difficult for me to talk about before you've seen it. Once it's out, and the reviews are out, I'd be able to talk about it more.
FANG: The Stratten film is your first non-horror film, and your first movie with a death scene.
CURTIS: Well, *Road Games* was really not a horror film, *She's In The Army Now* was not a horror film—I played a street-wise army recruit—and *Saturday Night Live* wasn't horror.
FANG: Still, it's your major break from horror. This is the one that will get press attention.
CURTIS: It already has.
FANG: Now, you've gotten a lot of flack from the press about your horror films—and joined in on that yourself to some extent . . .
CURTIS: Not at all. I'm not at all upset about having been in any of them, I feel my work has been good in them. It's just that I'm an actor—I want to be able to do different things.
FANG: The press, then, has given you a certain amount of trouble on them; how has the press dealt with your involvement in the Stratten film, which some might say is a sensational exploitation film?
CURTIS: They've dealt with it very well—they haven't brought it up to me once yet.
FANG: . . . then we're the first. What are your feelings on that?
CURTIS: I don't write these movies. I am an actor; and I was given a role that I thought was a very tragic role, in a film that was going to be made, and I thought it was a wonderful opportunity to show some different sides of my ability in a tragic love story.
FANG: I know you're anxious to be getting out to Long Island to enjoy the sun, so we've got just one more question for you. Why do you suppose it's so hard for Hollywood to detect talent when it is displayed in a horror film?
CURTIS: Life . . . in the fast lane. The price you pay when you want to sing the blues.

PHOTO: KIM GOTTLIEB © 1980 AVCO EMBASSY PICTURES
Falling for the old hand-through-the-window trick in *The Fog*.


ALFRED HITCHCOCK
R I P
(AT LEAST FOR
THE TIME BEING)

The Hitchcock Legacy

Part 2 – Murder in the Living Room

Crime, suspense and understated violence in weekly doses, under the Master's guidance—
Alfred Hitchcock Presents!

By MARK THOMAS McGEE

It was during a 1955 MCA conference that Lew Wasserman, Alfred Hitchcock's friend and agent, was suddenly struck with the idea of putting the cherubic director on television. By October of that same year, the CBS television network premiered *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. It was a half-hour anthology show of crime dramas with an O.Henry twist at the end. The series would run for years.

Hitchcock was often asked why he was so interested in crime. His reply was always the same. "I'm not. I'm only interested in the way it affects my career." The fact that the endless parade of motion picture kidnappers, saboteurs, and murderers were now following him to another medium was a clear indication that his career had definitely been affected. And when he decided to accept Wasserman's proposal he contacted Joan Harrison and hired her to act as his producer. Harrison had worked as his secretary on *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1935) and eventually became one of Hitchcock's regular writers, contributing to the screenplays of *Jamaica Inn* (1939), *Rebecca* (1940), *Foreign Correspondent* (1940), and *Suspicion* (1941). She left during the preparation of *Saboteur* (1944) to become an independent producer, selecting as her first project (appropriately enough) a suspense thriller, *The Phantom Lady* (1944), directed by another genre master, Robert Siodmak. It was Joan Harrison who was largely responsible for organizing the *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* crew, people like photographer John L. Russell and writer Francis Cockrell. Norman Lloyd, the actor who fell screaming from the Statue of Liberty in *Saboteur,* became her assistant. James Allardyce wrote the silly pieces of business for Hitchcock that served as a prologue and epilogue to the body of each show. Eight or nine of these discourses—often more entertaining than the show itself—were shot in a single day. In them the direc-

Ray Milland and Claire Griswold starred in "A Home Away From Home," an *Alfred Hitchcock Hour* scripted by Robert block (left), and Steve Dunne and Beatrice Straight dealt with the alien powers of mail-order mushrooms in Ray Bradbury's "Special Delivery."

tor would often appear in unflattering costumes, spouting macabre jokes and taking an occasional poke at the sponsor. "Most television commercials are deadly," he would say. "They are perfect for my type of show." Once he segued into the break with: "The views expressed in the following commercial are strictly those of the sponsor." Another on-air remark guaranteed to estrange him from his sponsors was his statement about how the television set had become like the toaster in American homes. "You press a button and the same thing pops up almost every time." This was long before people like Johnny Carson made it "okay" to kid the folks that paid the bills. When Hitch did it, it was still taboo. But he got away with it.

Hitchcock was asked by one interviewer why he didn't sell the products himself as so many of the television celebrities were doing at that time. Hitchcock was delighted by the thought. He envisioned himself "brushing" with the sponsor's product then spitting his teeth into a sink. Or swallowing some aspirin and then staggering off the stage. "I'd love to sell cars and, as I'm passing one of the doors, have the handle fall off as I'm extolling the car's virtures, and without dropping a line simply replace the handle." The sponsors were definitely not ready for that.

Hitchcock wanted the humor in his monologues to be similar to the story he often told about the man being led to the gallows who looked at the flimsily constructed trap door and asked, "Is that thing safe?" So Allardyce was shown *The Trouble With Harry* (1955) which exemplified the director's macabre sense of humor. A typical result was one episode in which Hitch is shown emerging from a baseball dug-out. After opening with his familiar "Good evening," he told the audience that a number of people had asked that he explain the game of baseball. "Normally I wouldn't do this, but some of those who wrote were professional ball players and I sensed a tone of urgency in their appeals.

Another hour-length entry was "Don't Look Behind You," starring Vera Miles.

"Baseball gets its name from the type of field in which it is played—a *baseball* field." You can fill in the rest.

Besides breaking the taboo against kidding the sponsor, Hitchcock also violated the Production Code's rule about always punishing the criminal. Many a half hour episode would fade to black on some murderer's smiling face, happy at being able to elude detection. The epilogue would then be used to explain how the police eventually caught the killer. This lip service was enough to pass the censors but didn't cut any ice with psychologist Fredric Wertham, author of the book *Seduction of the Innocent*. The doctor was extremely concerned about the influence of violent television programs on children and told Hitchcock so. Hitch responded by telling Dr. Wertham that it was up to the parents to control what their children watched. "But I think we can say this much about television as a kind of gleam of hope—I don't believe every child is corrupted by it."

Although he was able to side-step most of the television rules and regulations, the director occasionally ran into a brick wall concerning a few of the stories he wanted to film, like Lord Dunsany's *Two Bottles of Relish*. In that story a murderer disposed of his victim's corpse by eating it, making the taste palatable with two bottles of relish. "The sponsor wouldn't 'stomach' it and in a way I don't blame him; I loathe relish myself."

As for his actual participation in the program itself, Hitchcock mainly served as a guide, turning his staff onto writers like Roald Dahl and John Collier for source material. With his motion picture career in full swing, he hadn't the time to read the scripts or supervise the production. Out of some 350 shows he directed 187 and even these were done only as part of the orginal deal with MCA. Hitchcock claimed no special interest in these episodes, and such may have been the case, but his choices were usually plums, peopled with performers he had worked with before, like Joseph Cotten, Claude Rains and John Forsythe, or would work with again, including Barbara Bel Geddes and Vera Miles. Like all of the half-hour episodes of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, these were rehearsed for two days, and filmed in three.

In 1960, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* moved from CBS to the NBC network, and in '62 returned to CBS as the double-length *Alfred Hitchcock Hour*. After reverting to the tighter half-hour format, it moved again to NBC for its final '64-'65 season.

When Hitchcock was informed that the show was meeting its final rest, he simply remarked, "We must be philosophical about this. As we all know, TV is a great juggernaut, and we're all nuts and bolts attached to it. Sometimes the nuts and bolts fall off."

Les Tremayne offers Audrey Meadows a tatty fur in "Mrs. Bixby and The Colonel's Coat".

Hitch wants to hold your hand.

The Suspense Films of Alfred Hitchcock

Part Two: The Television Years

With over 350 episodes, Alfred Hitchcock Presents *represents the most massive portion of the Hitchcock legacy, far too extensive to be chronicled here. However, the series included only 18 episodes that had actually been directed by Hitchcock, as per his agreement with the MCA studios, as listed below. Also included is "Four O'Clock," an episode of the NBC anthology series* Suspicion, *and "Incident at a Corner" from* Ford Star Time, *also NBC.*

REVENGE (Aired October 2, 1955) Written by A.I. Bezzerides and Francis Cockrell, from the story by Samuel Blas.

Vera Miles plays a woman whose recovery from a nervous breakdown is halted when she is attacked by a man who breaks into her home. Ralph Meeker plays her avenging husband.

BREAKDOWN (November 13, 1955) Written by Francis Cockrell and Louis Pollack.

Joseph Cotten stars as a successful businessman who is disgusted by the behavior of a young employee who cries after being fired. In the style of classic tragedy, Cotten is brought to ground by a series of brutal incidents, and, in the ironic conclusion, learns the value of the ability to display emotion.

THE CASE OF MR. PELHAM (December 4, 1955) Written by Francis Cockrell, from the story by Anthony Armstrong.

Comic actor Tom Ewell appears in a dual role in this episode played for both suspense and laughs, as Mr. Pelham discovers that a lookalike is adopting his manner of dress and behavior in an attempt to take over his life. In order to foil the imposter, Pelham begins adopting strange habits.

BACK FOR CHRISTMAS (March 4, 1956) Written by Francis Cockrell from John Collier's story.

John Williams stars as a man who murders his wife and buries her in the basement—and then receives an unwanted posthumous Christmas present.

WET SATURDAY (September 30, 1956) Written by Marian Cockrell from John Collier's story.

Sir Cedric Hardwicke plays a wealthy man whose deranged daughter kills her boyfriend with a shovel. Hardwicke dreams up a meticulous plan to frame his neighbor for the crime.

MR. BLANCHARD'S SECRET (December 23, 1956) Written by Sarett Rudley from Emily Neff's story.

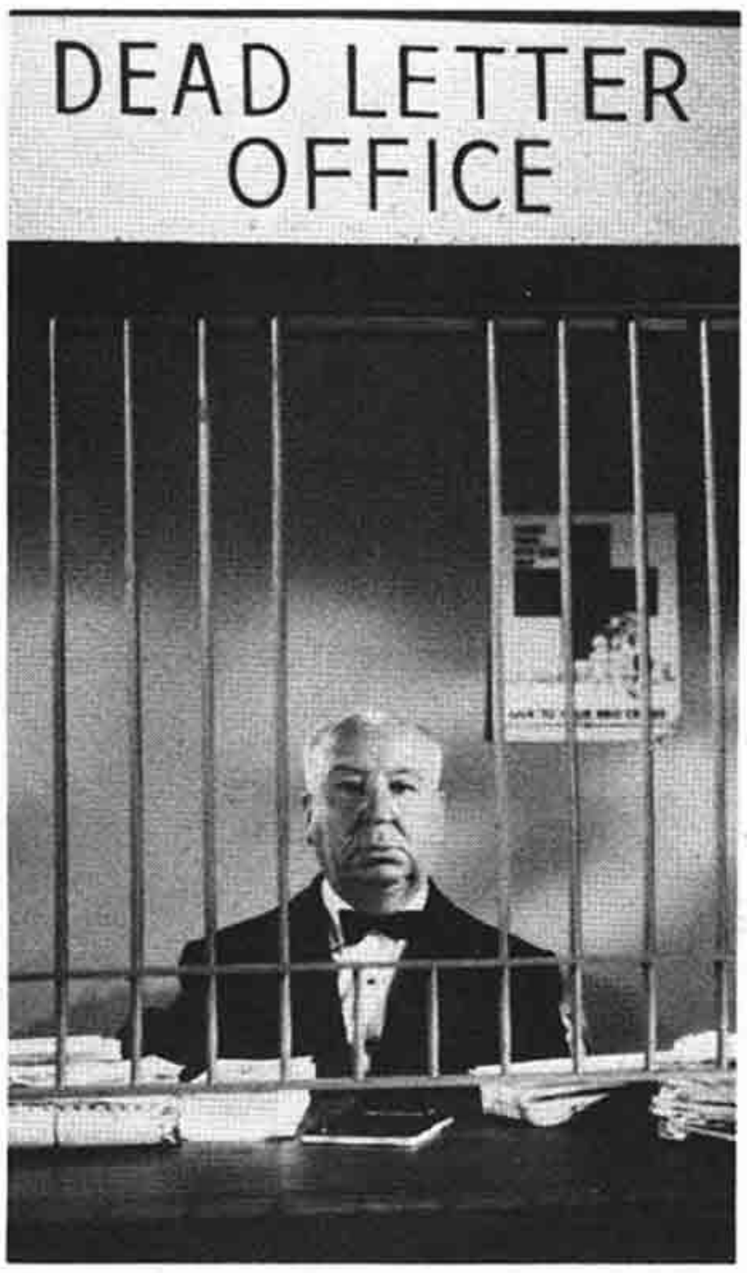
Parallels the themes of Hitchcock's *Rear Window,* though Neff's story predates the film (but not the Cornall Woolrich novel that was the basis of the film—got it?). Mary Scott plays a mystery writer who becomes convinced that her neighbor, Mr. Blanchard, has murdered his wife. The twist here is *Rear Window's* opposite.

ONE MORE MILE TO GO (April 7, 1957) Written by James Cavanaugh, from the story by F. J. Smith.

A flickering taillight causes police problems for wife-murderer David Wayne, who is carrying a silent passenger in his trunk.

FOUR O'CLOCK (September 30, 1957) Written by Francis Cockrell from the Cornell Woolrich story.

Between seasons, the AHP crew worked with the master on this episode of the NBC suspense series *Suspicion,* starring E. G. Marshall as a jealous husband. Marshall plants a time-bomb in the basement of his home, meant for his wife and her lover, but his scheme backfires when a teenage gang breaks in, leaving him tied up and gagged—and watching the clock. Suspense is maintained for a full hour by the visits of a meter reader and a little boy, and Marshall's attempts to communicate.



A gentle reminder to keep those cards and letters coming into "The Postal Zone."

THE PERFECT CRIME (October 20, 1957) Written by Sterling Silliphant from Ben Ray Redman's story.

Vincent Price plays a criminologist who has disguised his role in a murder by framing an innocent man. James Gregory plays a man who uncovers Price's crooked trail—and comes to a claustrophic end.

LAMB TO THE SLAUGHTER (April 13, 1958) Written by Roald Dahl from his short story.

When Barbara Bel Geddes' police chief husband announces his intention to leave her, she beats him to death with a frozen leg of lamb. The resulting horde of police investigators are stymied in their search for the "blunt object" that was the instrument of death.

DIP IN THE POOL (September 14, 1958) Written by Francis Cockrell from the Roald Dahl story.

Keenan Wynn and Fay Wray are a couple who plan to spend their small inheritance on a European vacation. When Wynn gambles most of it away during their ocean voyage, he conceives of a clever scheme to win it all back. Hitchcock's only TV cameo appearance: on a magazine cover.

POISON (October 5, 1958) Written by Casey Robinson from the Roald Dahl story.

James Donald plays an alcoholic who explains to his doctor (Wendell Corey) that he is being tracked by a venomous snake, but his accounts are dismissed as a boozer's hallucinations.

BANQUO'S CHAIR (May 3, 1959) Written by Francis Cockrell from the Rupert Croft-Cooke story.

John Williams again, as a police inspector who hires an actress to pose as a dead woman, hoping to frighten the murderer into a full confession.

ARTHUR (September 27, 1959) Written by James Cavanaugh from the Arthur Williams story.

Laurence Harvey plays the title role opposite AIP terror queen Hazel Court, as Harvey's marriage-minded girlfriend. Tired of her demands for a wedding, Harvey kills Court and disposes of her body by a method reminiscent of EC horror comics.

THE CRYSTAL TRENCH (October 4, 1959) Written by Sterling Silliphant from the A. E. W. Mason story.

James Donald and Patricia Owens play a newly married couple who are quickly separated by death when the husband, after a mountain climbing accident, is sealed into a glacier. The widow faithfully waits for forty years for the glacier to shift, so that she can again see her late, flash-frozen husband.

INCIDENT AT A CORNER (April 5, 1960) Written by Charlotte Armstrong from her story.

After the president of a local Parents' association is reprimanded by a school crossing guard for careless driving, the guard is fired because of an anonymous note suggesting that he is too friendly with some of the schoolgirls. The script for this *Ford Star Time* offering borrowed a plot device from Kurasawa's *Rashoman*—a single event repeated through the eyes of several characters.

MRS. BIXBY AND THE COLONEL'S COAT (September 27, 1960) Written by Halsted Welles from Roald Dahl's short story.

Audrey Meadows plays an unfaithful wife who receives an expensive mink coat as a gift from her lover, the Colonel. She concocts a plan that should allow her to keep the coat, without enraging her jealous husband.

THE HORSEPLAYER (March 14, 1961) Written by Henry Slesar from his story.

Claude Rains plays a priest at a run-down parish who learns that the bulk of the church's income is from a gambler who, for luck's sake, donates a percentage of his winnings to the collection. Seduced by the prospect of easy wealth for the impoverished church, Rains stakes the gambler to several hundred dollars of church funds. When Rains, plagued by guilt, prays that his horse should *not* win, his prayers are answered in an unusual fashion.

BANG! YOU'RE DEAD! (October 17, 1961) Written by Harolf Swanson from Margery Vosper's story.

The ever-popular Billy Mumy, in perhaps his greatest role, as a little boy who finds his uncle's gun, which everyone around him assumes to be a toy.

I SAW THE WHOLE THING (October 11, 1962) Written by Henry C. Leon and Henry Slesar from Slesar's story.

John Forsythe, as the accused man in a hit-and-run case, must discredit the accounts of several eyewitnesses in order to prove his innocence.

Horror in the Comics
Part 4

By RON GOULART

One sure source of guaranteed horror in the comic books of the 1940s was the numerous features that starred not caped good guys but unabashedly evil villains and villainesses. There was a gigantic representative of the Yellow Peril who made King Kong look like a well mannered house pet; there were several mad scientists whose favorite light industry was making monsters; there were sultry ladies sent by Satan to seduce innocent souls; and there was even the Frankenstein monster himself. In this chapter of our informal history we'll be meeting, from a safe distance, all of them.

Evil being an equal opportunity field, there were several nasty females doing dark deeds in the comic books of the forties. One of the most unnerving was the Black Widow, who, fortunately, had a short career in some of the Marvel titles of the era. The August, 1940 issue of *Mystic Comics* contained her first appearance. In that one Claire Voyant, a medium, is murdered by a "maddened client" and goes right straight to Hell. Down there Satan decides Claire will make an effective ambassador and he performs mystic rites, requiring a good deal of multicolored flame, that transform her into the Black Widow. Claire's first Earthside mission is to avenge her own death, which she does merely by touching her killer. Flames burst forth from the contact point, the fellow falls immediately dead with a perfect black widow spider etched on his lifeless forehead. When she reports back to her new boss, he is so gratified he suggests further employment. "On the upper world are mortal creatures whose hearts are blackened with wickedness and corruption. You, the Black Widow, will bring their souls to me!"

Dressed for her collection work in dark leotard, scarlet cloak and boots, the Black Widow could've passed for a lady superhero were it not for her eyes. Deeply rimmed in black, they give a sinister cast to her face that even her long blonde hair couldn't sufficiently compensate for. Worse, when she closed in to deliver "the kiss of death" to the sinner she was dispatching to Hades, tiny skulls appeared smack in the center of each of her eyeballs. *The Black Widow* was the joint creation of artist Harry Sahle and writer George Kapitan. Artwork on her final appearance, in the fall 1943 issue of *All Select Comics*, was by Stan Drake, still several years away from his somewhat milder *The Heart of Juliet Jones* comic strips.

SILVER STREAK COMICS
THE CLAW RETURNS
SEPT. No. 6
10¢
THE AVENGING HAND OF THE
CLAW
REACHES OUT TO DESTROY THE LIVES OF HIS ENEMIES!
THE EXCITING ADVENTURES OF THE WORLD'S MOST FANTASTIC CRIMINAL
JACK COLE

Jack Cole, best known for *Plastic Man*, gave us the ultimate villain, *The Claw*.

In *Pep Comics* from June through October of 1941 an even nastier wench was to be found. Her name was Madam Satan and she, too, was an emissary of the Devil. Unlike the death-eyed Black Widow, however, Madam Satan was out to collect the souls of decent folks as well as those of hopeless sinners. She was a sultry lady, a dark haired version of the heartless vamp who haunted the movies of the years between the two World Wars, and she was alarmingly adept at turning innocent fellows into deepdyed scoundrels. An early caption explained her origin this way, "The Devil searched far and long for an ally to wreak havoc amongst mortals ... Then the black, corrupt soul of a beautiful woman, a victim of her own fiendish plan on Earth, left its bodily habitation to stand before the king of Purgatory ... and his search was at an end ... the Devil had

The MOLD
FRANKENSTEIN, WOULD YOU GET US SOME COOKES FROM MR. LA TOUR'S BAKERY?
SURE, KIDS- WAIT OUT HERE.
HELLO, MR. LA TOUR. CAN I GET SOME COOKIES... FREE?
FREE! ALWAYS EET BES FREE! HAVE YOU NONE OF ZE MONEY?

THE LIFE-GIVING SPARK TAKES EFFECT.
LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TWO, MR FRANKENSTEIN, ...MRS FRANKENSTEIN.
I HAVE CREATED THIS COMPANION FOR YOU ON THE CONDITION THAT YOU GO AWAY TO A DESERTED SPOT, AND LET PEOPLE LIVE WITHOUT FEAR OF YOU.
I WILL DO AS YOU SAY.
I WILL ACCOMPANY YOU A WAY, TO CHECK ON HER PROGRESS, OF COURSE. I WILL NOT BE TOO NEAR YOU BUT IF YOU NEED ME, I WON'T BE FAR AWAY.
DR ULLRICH STARTS THE TWO ON THEIR JOURNEY BY DRIVING THEM TO A BLEAK FOREST.
ART: © CRESTWOOD PUBLISHING CO.

Dick Briefer tried to make Frankenstein's creation the nastiest monster of them all but wound up making him a comedy feature.

found himself a fitting mate." Using the name Iola, and donning slinky satin evening gowns, Madam Satan insinuates herself into various lives and sets out to corrupt as many men as possible. A typical victim, Carl Jensen, is lured away from is true love an is soon "Completely in the toils of the creature from the netherworld, beginning a mad and expensive orgy of merrymaking." Soon broke, Carl is goaded into a life of crime. "Shower me with real gifts! Expensive ones," Iola urges her bedazzled victim. "Steal if you must!" After beating up his own father and shooting his real love, Carl comes to his senses. He sees Iola as she really is, her face a grinning, green skull.

Undaunted, Iola tries next to convince the townspeople of a sedate New England village that a new bride who suffers from catalepsy is actually a vampire. This sequence, which stretched over two issues, is rich with gruesome images: Iola turning into a vampire bat, Iola sucking the blood from a golden haired tot, one of her dupes being impaled on the stake meant for the innocent bride. Add to these the many shots of Madam Satan in a lowcut scarlet gown and the cataleptic newlywed in her filmy nightdress and you have a pretty heady mixture for the preadolescent readers of the day. Although Iola never quite succeeded in shipping an innocent soul to Hell, she did cause an awful lot of death and destruction in her brief career. Opposing her in most of her capers was a cherubic friar with the do-good name of Brother Sunbeam. He rides a mule, materializes out of nowhere and glows strangely. In the penultimate episode he shows up on Bald Mountain, the stronghold of the Devil, to suggest, "Give up your evil plotting against man, for you are doomed to failure. Man is essentially good." This gets, especially since World War II has already long since commenced in Europe, a big laugh from Lucifer. Madam Satan, hand on hip and showing considerable bare thigh, assures Sunbeam that "evil will prevail!" *Madam Satan* was drawn, with obvious relish, by Harry Lucey. The scripts were most likely by Joe Blair, whose grim work we've encountered before in our history. All in all, the feature was a bizarre and unsettling one and it made a strong impression on at least one of *Pep*'s young readers.

There were several other strange and wicked women to be found. Ostensibly on the side of right, Fantomah of *Jungle Comics* nevertheless shared many traits with the aforementioned evil females. Most disturbing was her ability to detach her head, turn it into a skull and cause it to appear, floating, above her intended victim. Seeing that glowing blonde-haired skull scowling through the foliage struck terror in many a heart. Fantomah, billed as "the most remarkable woman ever known," limited her practice to Africa and used "her superior abilities and wizardry to protect the welfare of jungle creatures." Since numerous crazed scientists found their way to her vicinity, Fantomah was kept busy outwitting super-gorillas and giant reptiles. Another frightening aspect of the feature was the artwork, by the unjustly forgotten Henry Fletcher. A true primitive, Fletcher drew like a sort of deranged Grandma Moses and there's been no one like him since. More openly sinister were such femmes fatale as the Queen of Evil, a reincarnated Egyptian princess who did her dirty work in *Fantastic Comics*, and the Sorceress of Zoom in the aptly named *Weird Comics*. Zoom was "a magic city that appears and disappears at the will of its powerful ruler." When the Sorceress commanded you to look deep into her eyes, you saw not only tiny skulls but crossbones beneath them. By the end of 1941 both these ladies had ceased their lowdown ways and were out of business.

Inspired by the cinematic successes of Colin Clive and Basil Rathbone, several comic book medical men set out to learn monster making in the privacy of their own home. Over at *Speed Comics* there was Landor, Maker of Monsters. A skull-faced chap in green robe and cowl, this "mad brilliant genius" had a knack for turning out all manner of monsters. One issue it'd be a fishman, the next a seven foot tall flying vampire woman and then a mole who "measures 12 feet from head to tail." Landor set up shop in the autumn of 1939, surviving just short of a year. A potential competitor was Kardo the Monster Maker,

but he only managed to make it through one 1940 issue of *Masked Marvel Comics* (the magazine itself lasted three). The story gets off to a lively start when a seedy fellow delivers a strange package to "a crumbling and isolated house." This is the home of Kardo, "world famous scientist." When one of the doctor's young associates opens the package and finds it contains a human foot he grows angry. "Kardo! You're making another monster! You gave me your *word* you were through with that!" "Keep out of my affairs," snaps the dapper scientist. He is, of course, building a monster and the thing, eight feet tall, greenfaced and red-eyed, wrapped up like a mummy, comes to life before Kardo can even attach that second foot. After stumping around the mansion and raising havoc for a spell, the creature falls through a high window and is impaled on an iron-spike fence. The episode ends with Kardo wondering if this was his last monster. He still has, after all, that spare foot to work with.

One of my favorite monsters was the Purple Zombie. He began his career in the August, 1940 issue of *Heroic Comics*, written and drawn by Tarpe Mills (the lady who also did *Miss Fury*). He is the creation of a mean-minded scientist, Dr. Malinsky, who plans an army of zombies to do the bidding of the warmongers who have financed his research. The Zombie, who is the color of black raspberry ice cream and goes around barechested and baldheaded, rebels at the idea of being exploited. A pacifist at heart, he strangles Malinsky and then goes hunting for the backers. Later he teams up with Kimberly Hale, Malinsky's honest associate, and a redhaired, hunchbacked inventor known as Chico. Among Chico's inventions is an army of mechanized skeletons.

There's no doubt that the most famous monster ever is the one whipped up in the last century by Dr. Frankenstein. Although this monster has had several comic book incarnations, we'll concentrate on his four-color debut. This took place in the December, 1940 issue of *Prize Comics*. These new adventures, by Dick Briefer, updated the legend and had Victor Frankenstein and his runaway creature battling each other across the contemporary Eastern United States. Even though initially the gigantic monster looked a good deal like Boris Karloff's Universal version, each story announced it was based on Mary Shelley's classic (and public domain) novel. In his early escapades the monster was completely rotten, having none of the redeeming qualities of the Karloff portrayal. "I am the MONSTER created by Frankenstein," he stated. "As long as he lives, I will make him and the human race SUFFER my revenge!" Merciless, the monster would issue warnings such as, "At exactly 12 noon I will destroy the business section of Centerville," and proceed to do exactly that, ripping up buildings, men, women, children, buses and lamp posts.

Early on Briefer added a costumed hero named Bulldog Denny, crippled in his youth by the creature and nursed to health and herohood by Dr. Frankenstein, to combat the heedless monster. Every time Denny defeated the creature, it would rise again and cause more bloodshed. Soon deciding the monster was far and away the more interesting of the two, Briefer dumped Denny. He also took to calling the monster by its creator's name, explaining to his readers that "although Frankenstein is the name of the man who created the monster, the name is universally accepted to be that of the ghastly creation." On his own Frankenstein continued to have gruesome adventures. He met another eccentric scientist, a fellow who built him a short-lived mate; he visited Hell, played poker with the Devil and took a part-time job as his emissary; he journeyed to Europe to fight the Nazis. As World War II progressed Briefer seemed to grow increasingly restless with the feature and finally he turned *Frankenstein* into a humor feature, parodying all the supernatural elements he'd been serious about. Since he'd always worked in a loose, cartoony style the transition was not jarring. The funny Frankenstein went on to be even more successful than the serious one, even winding up with a whole comic book of his own.

An even bigger villain, especially in terms of size, was the Claw. The quintessential sinister Oriental, the Claw first loomed into view in *Silver Streak Comics* #1 in December of 1939. "A monster of miraculous powers who is out to dominate the universe," the Claw had all the vicious

BLACK WIDOW!! COME!!!
MY MASTER COMMANDS!!
THE BLACK WIDOW FACES SATAN!
YES! ON EARTH THERE IS ONE WHO IS WANTED IN HADES! GO FORTH, BLACK WIDOW AND BRING HIM TO ME!
YOU CALLED, MY MASTER?
..AND SO..UP FROM THE VERY BOTTOM OF THE INFINITE, RISES THE BLACK WIDOW, DEVIL'S OWN MESSENGER TO CLAIM AN EVIL SOUL!
While ON EARTH ..OGOR PREPARES FOR A LONG JOURNEY...
I HAVE MADE ENOUGH MONEY NOW..MANY PEOPLE HAVE DIED BECAUSE I TOLD THEM NOT TO SUMMON THE DOCTOR AND TO TRUST ME, INSTEAD!! HA!HA! THEIR DEATHS HAVE MADE ME RICH!!
AS HE IS ABOUT TO LEAVE, OGOR SEES A STARTLING SIGHT...
..AND NOW TO SKIP TOWN WHILE THE SKIPPING'S GOOD!! WH... WHAT'S THAT?!!
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO SKIP ANYWHERE, MR. OGOR!!
AT LAST THE MISLED TONY HAS SEEN THE LIGHT!
A DOCTOR HEARD MY PEPITO CRYING LAST NIGHT AND CAME UP TO LOOK AT HIM... HE HAD TO AMPUTATE HIS LEG BECAUSE IT GOT INFECTED!!.. IT WAS YOUR FAULT, YOU EVIL ONE.. AND SO... I AM GOING TO KILL YOU!!
BUT!...
OGOR MAKES A SURPRISE MOVE!..
OHHHH!!
IF ANY KILLING IS TO BE DONE I'LL DO IT!!
ART: © DARING COMICS CO.
HELLO CARL DEAR! BACK SO SOON?
YES! I'VE COME BACK TO KILL YOU! YOU..YOU...SHE-DEVIL!
HA HA! A SHE-DEVIL HAS WILES, CARL DEAR! COME TO ME CARL! COME TO ME, I SAY!
NOW, KISS ME! I COMMAND YOU!
HEAVEN HELP ME! THOSE EYES...I CAN'T RESIST HER!
CLOSER CLOSER STUPID MORTAL FOR YOUR KISS! YOUR KISS OF DEATH!
CARL!! DARLING! DON'T KISS THAT THING!
ANITA! YOU'RE ALIVE! OH DEAREST! AND I THOUGHT I'D LOST YOU!
COME BACK! COME BACK TO ME, I TELL YOU!
SHE...SHE'S DEATH, CARL! IT CAME TO ME IN A DREAM! OOoo...I'M GOING TO FAINT!
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I SHALL NOT FAIL A SECOND TIME, MASTER! I SHALL KNOW HOW TO COMBAT THAT POWER THE NEXT TIME!
WHILE BACK ON EARTH THE SUN IS RISING..
HOW BEAUTIFUL ITS LIGHT IS!..AND HOW CLEARLY I CAN SEE THINGS NOW! HOW COULD I EVER HAVE FORSAKEN MY SWEET MY GOOD ANITA FOR THAT...THAT THING!
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WHO IS THIS STRANGE CREATURE OF THE SUNLIGHT, THE GUIDING HAND OF GOOD? THE NEXT ISSUE OF PEP COMICS CONTAINS THE ANSWER!
ART: © YOUR GUIDE PUBLICATIONS

***The black Widow* and *Madame Satan* turned over souls to the devil.**

FANTOMAH WHISKS THE SCIENTIST THROUGH THE AIR . . . . . .
DOWN BELOW YOU IS YOUR DEMONIZED ARMY OF GORILLAS!
FANTOMAH RELEASES HIM . . . . .
AND YOUR SERUM, TOO, SHALL BE DESTROYED!
HE FALLS IN THE PATH OF THE BLOOD-THIRSTY ARMY.
DOCTOR, YOUR TIME HAS COME!
FANTOMAH USES HER JUNGLE RESTORATIVE RAY, AND THE APES BECOME NORMAL.
GO BACK TO YOUR REGION AND STAY!
FANTOMAH WILL APPEAR AGAIN IN THE NEXT ISSUE!
ART: © MLJ MAGAZINES

Henry Fletcher's forgettable art and story made *Fantomah* a tepid and far from hair-raising strip.

attributes of the better known Dr. Fu Manchu. What gave him an edge, for those of us who doted on his early misdeeds, was the fact that he could grow several stories high at will. Seeing the Claw come swelling up out of the midnight sea smack in the path of an unsuspecting ocean liner or watching him squeeze a disloyal minion to death in one huge hand while cackling, "Die, swine!" were awesome experiences. Completely evil, the Claw lived but to kill, plunder and ravage. Defeats taught him nothing. "The world will feel my wrath!" he'd promise even when temporarilly locked behind bars. These early stories were written and drawn by Jack Cole, a highly gifted man who would soon create *Plastic Man*, and they have an inventiveness and wacky vitality few other artists of the period delivered.

In his earliest forays against humanity the Claw was opposed by various business-suited civilians. Eventually Cole decided to pit his monumental villain against a new hero named the Daredevil (this was the dashing fellow in the crimson and blue costume with the spiked belt, not the latter day Marvel superguy). Their first encounter sprawled across 16 jampacked pages, an unusual thing in those days when 10 and 12 pages was the maximum. Daredevil and the Claw battle in the streets of Manhattan, where the Claw's wild punches topple skyscrapers; the Claw tosses his opponent in a snake pit; Daredevil gives him a hotfoot with a stick of dynamite. At the windup of the contest the Claw scoops up Daredevil and makes a try at swallowing him alive. The resourceful Daredevil has a trick up his sleeve. "If dynamite down his windpipe fails, I'll soon be ground meat!" But the unexpected explosion causes the Claw to cough up his enemy. The battle went on for several issues, making both characters newsstand stars. In 1941 *Daredevil Comics* came along and the team split up, Daredevil tackling new villainies and the Claw soloing in the back of the book.

There was still a great deal of other horrible stuff to be found in the comic books of three and four decades ago. In our installment next issue we'll be unearthing more of it.

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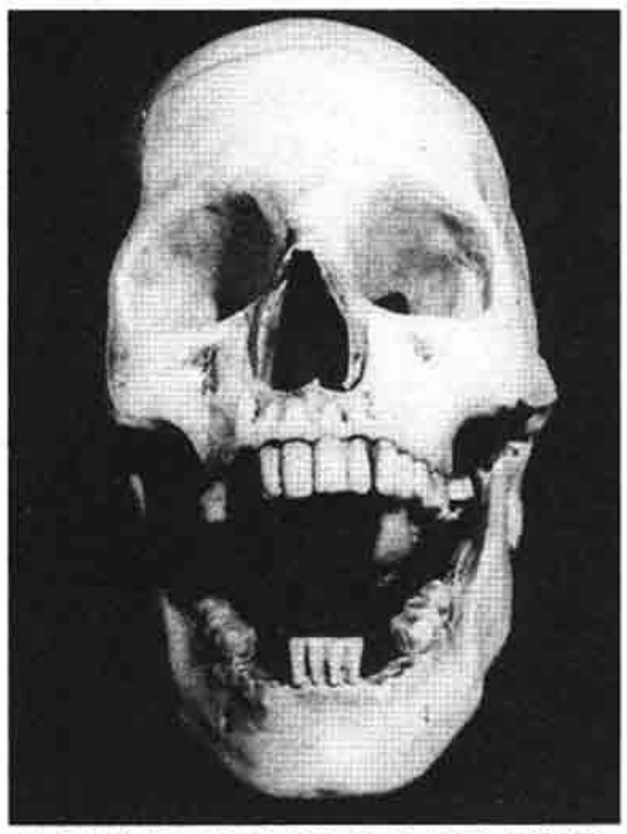

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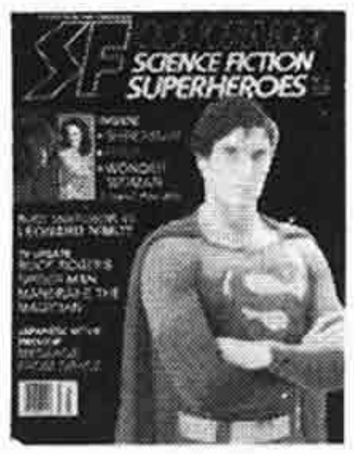

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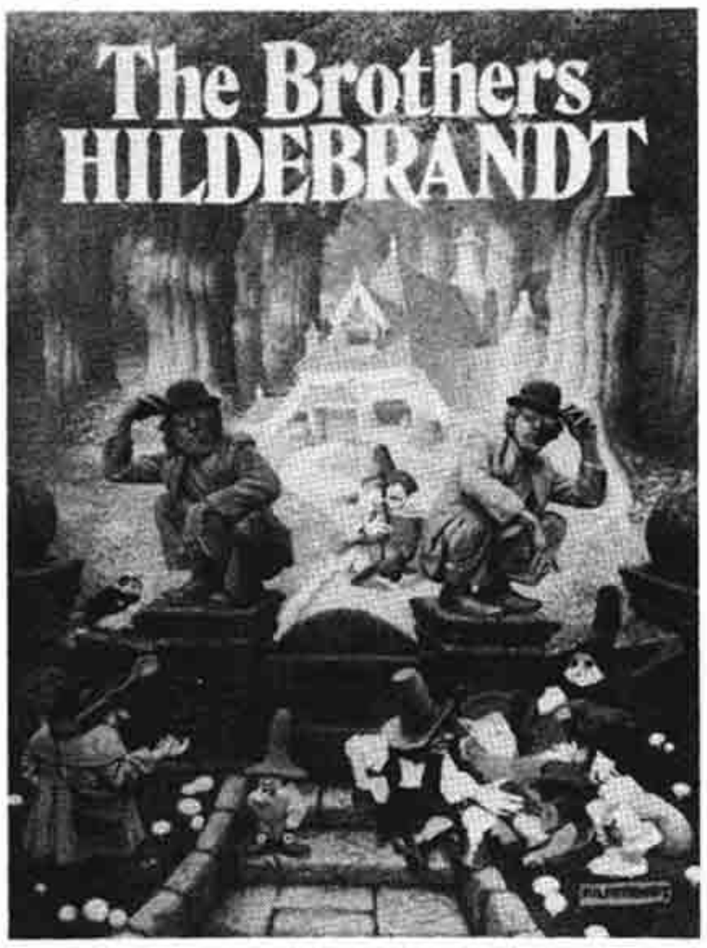

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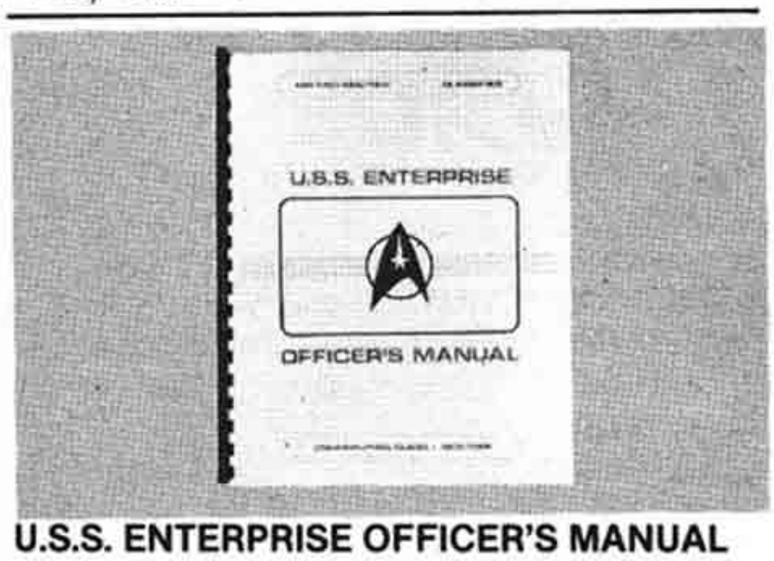

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Taste Will Tell ...

Chicago-based, but national in influence, Gene Siskel and Roger Ebert have given some terror films a hard time. We set out to learn why!

By JOSEPH REBOY

It has been suggested to me that a great way to keep people from seeing a truly awful movie is to tell them the ending. I like that idea a lot, and I know it's a powerful (and controversial) weapon. So you're going to have to trust me to use it wisely . . . and sparingly.

Those words, written by Gene Siskel for the May 12, 1980 edition of the Chicago *Tribune*, are the lead-in to what many readers feel is his most infamous article to date on horror movies. It is from his review of *Friday the 13th*, a review which resulted in an on-going controversy in the FANGORIA letters column. And, though the letters published divide rather evenly between pro- and anti-Siskel lines, editor Bob Martin claims that the anti-Siskel letters far outnumber those supporting the critic's views. Assuming this to be so, how did one man, so quickly and so totally, become a target for such a vast majority of this magazine's readership?

Larry Coulter, a FANGORIA reader, happened to have come across the *Friday the 13th* review, and sent it in to the magazine. He found it above and beyond the duties of horror movie trashing. It spawned an angry editorial from Martin, and a slew of letters to the magazine.

The review itself suggests where people might send letters to complain about the movie, including a rough address for the actress Betsy Palmer, who portrayed the over-protective Mrs. Voorhees in the film. It also gives away most of the ending.

FANGORIA responded by telling irate horror movie buffs (the bulk of its readership) where to write Siskel to complain. Martin also wrote Siskel, asking for a reply. Apparently, these letters never reached him.

Now, in the wake of *Friday the 13th Part II*, and a shake-up in the MPAA, FANGORIA decided an open talk with Siskel, and also with Roger Ebert, who is a film critic for the Chicago *Sun-Times*, and Gene's Co-host on the WTTW produced weekly *Sneak Previews* was the only road to the

resolution of the controversy.

Both men have spoken out against censorship. Siskel has often been critical of the review board for the Chicago Police Department. "They have, I thought, in the past given some rough ratings to adult films. I didn't agree with their decisions. I do agree on their decision on one film which just happened, which is *Maniac,* which they gave an 'adults only' for in Chicago."

The C.P.D. review board rates only when there is some question of whether a movie should be adults only or not.

One of the major complaints about both Siskel and Ebert is that they are biased against horror movies. Siskel was quick to point out that he is not.

"In the past two months, I gave very positive reviews to *The Howling,* and to *Funhouse.* Though I enjoyed them both and gave very strong reviews . . . I liked *The Howling* much more. I gave it three and a half stars out of four, which to me is very enthusiastic, and kind of rare. I gave *Funhouse* a three star rating, and of course *Halloween* made my "Ten Best" list for the year it was released (1978), and I liked *Dressed to Kill.* I'm neither against horror films or horror film-makers in particular, although I don't care for *Texas Chainsaw Massacre,* which was Tobe Hooper, I liked *Funhouse,* another Hooper film. In other words, I call them as I see them."

But how could he justify giving away the endings of movies, and ripping them apart with such virulence?

"How can I justify it? On the basis of good reporting and sound criticism. These movies are absolutely beneath contempt in most cases. And I think anyone who finds them entertaining has a peculiar sense of what a good movie is. I'm not talking about the good horror movies . . . I just sat through *The Burning* this morning, for example. *The Burning* has almost precisely the same plot as *Friday the 13th Part II.* In both cases, you have a bunch of young people in a summer camp, there's some legend about the camp across the lake, and some person there who was in the first case drowned and in this case burned, and that he's gonna come back and get you. The rest of the movie is just teenagers walking off by themselves in the woods and being attacked. *The Burning* and *Friday the 13th Part II,* either one, show absolutely no artistry, no imagination, no originality, no acting ability; they are both directed in a flat-footed way, and they're simply exploitation rip-offs. Anyone who loves movies, and especially loves horror movies, ought to be horrified by these movies."

Siskel rarely gives away the ending of a movie he reviews, but he took exception to *Friday the 13th.* "I think I said right in the beginning of the review, it's a rare, unusual move to make, but I took pains to explain that it was an unusual step, and I wouldn't be doing it again . . . and I haven't. It was done to make a point."

Horror movies nowadays *are* a far cry from the monster features of previous years. The film industry has been moving into a period of re-defining the term 'horror.' Fantasy creatures who would destroy and wreak havoc 10 years ago have become troubled people who pick up knives and stab people. Most of these movies have received pretty bad reviews, but Gene admits that he does like some of them. Which ones?

"I mentioned already *The Howling, Halloween,* and *Funhouse.* I liked *Halloween* the most. I think with that one I felt a joy on the part of the filmmaker in entertaining the audience. In other words, I was scared . . . I was pleased by that. I wasn't grossed out."

But every coin has two sides. Which didn't he like?

"Dozens of them. To me, these films are nothing more than killing films, they're films that are nothing more than about the sensation of stalking a victim and slicing it up, most typically a woman. I find nothing particularly pleasing about that. In *Maniac,* I don't see any point in showing a head blow up in slow motion. To me, that's just playing up to the sickies in the audience. You're not going to convince me that that has anything to do with film art. In *Dead & Buried* (Ron Schusett/Dan O'Bannon), you see a scalp peeled back off a head. That grosses me out. It's sick, and I fail to appreciate the entertainment value in that."

And where does all this lead to?

"It doesn't seem to be slowing down too much. I think that it's going to continue. It's always very strong in the summer, and I think that it has a built-in appeal. If you say that this is the most shocking film ever made, I think that that's a great come-on for a lot of people. I think as long as films are made that way, they'll continue to make money, if done for a profit, and if they are truly frightening. I don't see any decline. I think it's one of the strongest genres in American film. There are more horror movies, shock movies if you want to call them that, being made than all the musicals, westerns, and gangster pictures put together. It is a major genre of American film."

What of Roger Ebert's views? Does the Pulitzer prize-winning journalist see any good coming out of this trend?

"If these movies are able to give a start to directors who may go on to do something better, then that's good. For example, *Halloween,* which is a very good movie, which was one of my top ten movies of the year, has launched the career of John Carpenter, who I think is a very talented director. *Dressed to Kill* is an extremely good movie by Brian DePalma, who's a good director. In general though, most of the rip-off, sleaze, horror movies are essentially just dehumanizing. There is an interesting psycho-analytical study about the readership, for example, of magazines who specialize in monsters and in ghouls."

"Such as FANGORIA?" I asked.

"I'm not familiar with that particular magazine. But in general, this sort of thing provides a displaced way of dealing with sex. Generally speaking, as audiences grow more mature and grow more interested in human relationships they become less interested in these one-dimensional types of escapism."

Some people believe that *Sneak Previews* is a low-brow show formed around two guys giving personal opinions in little

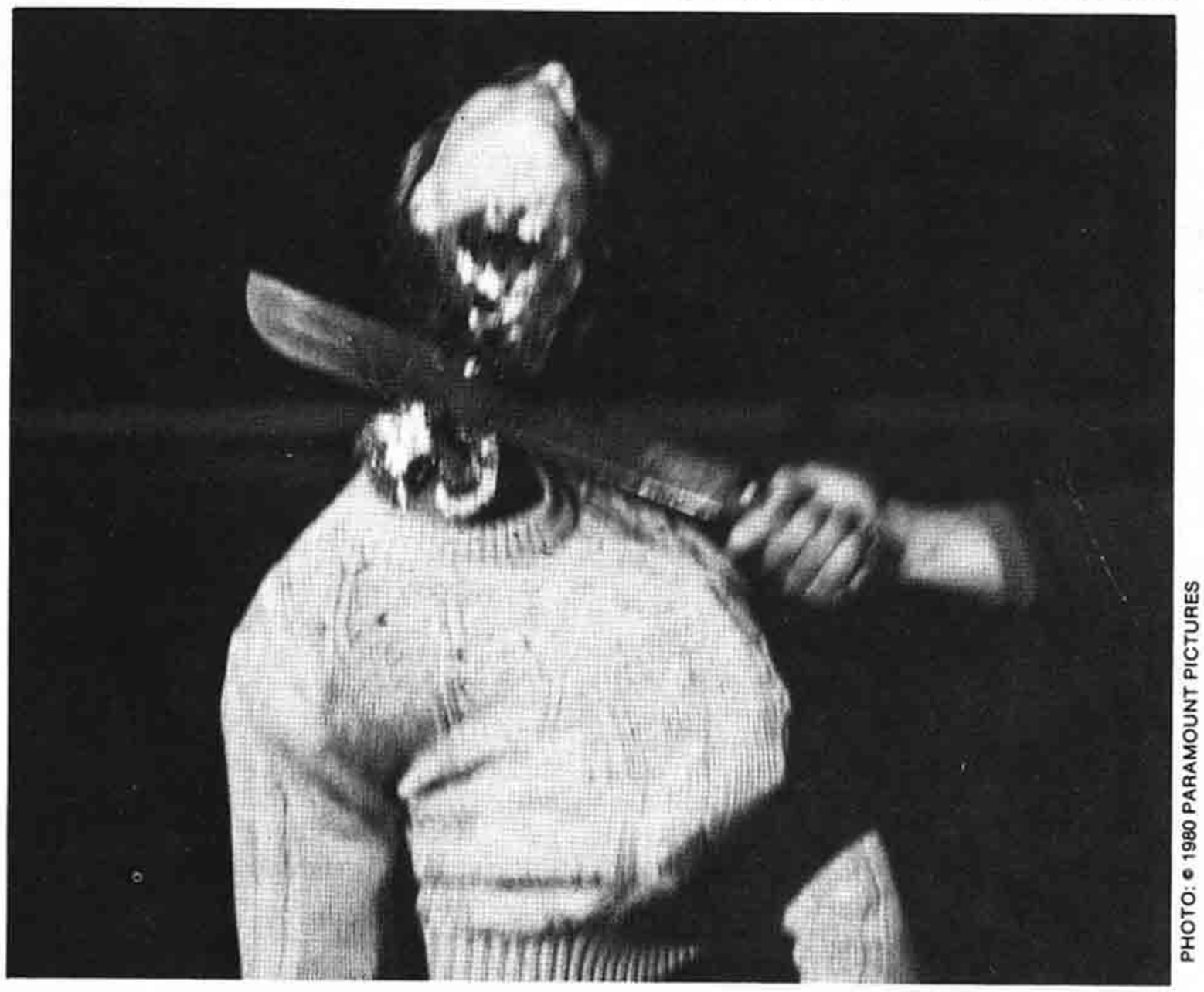
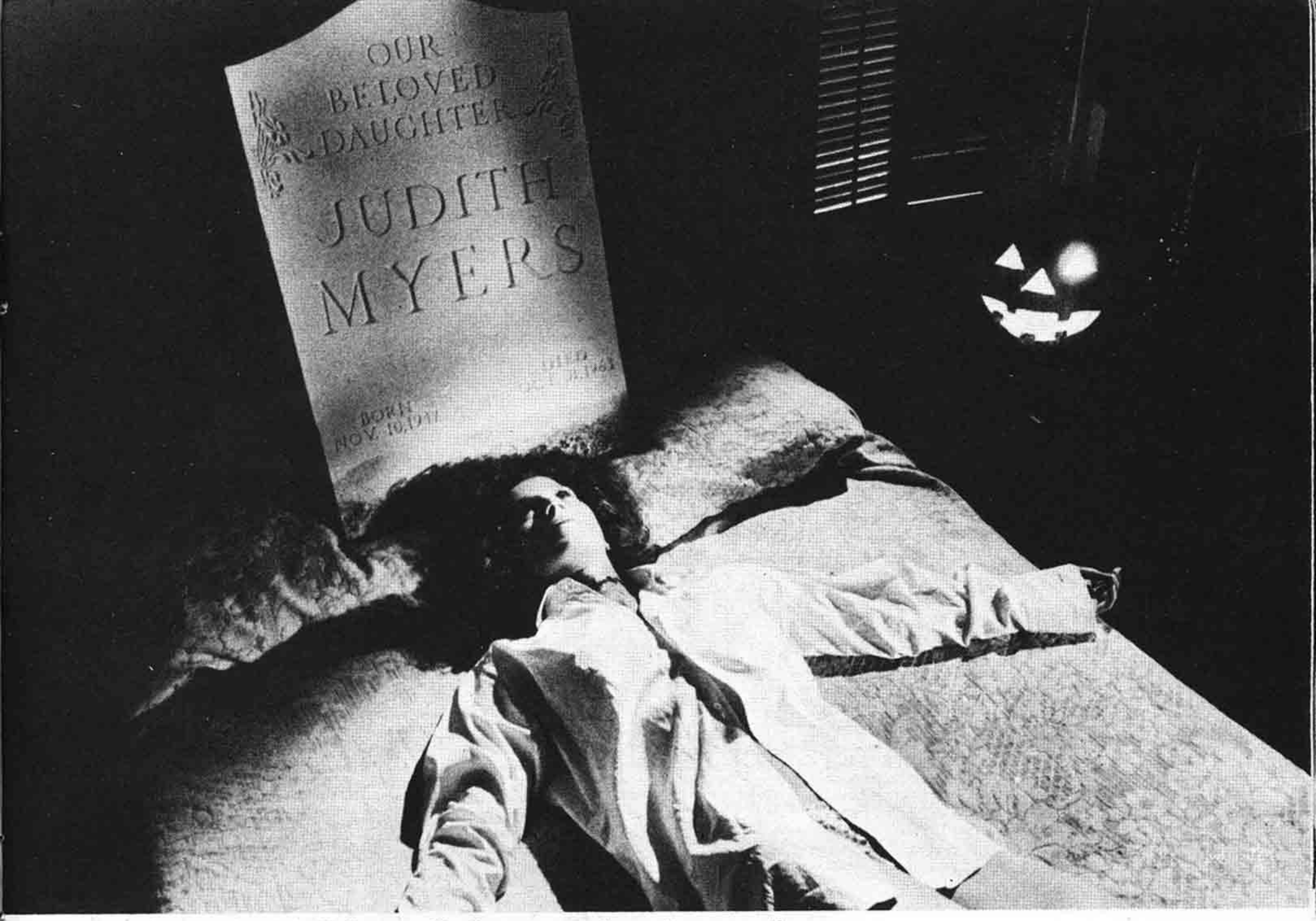


PHOTO: © 1980 PARAMOUNT PICTURES

Great Moments in Cinema:* Betsy Palmer loses her head over critical reaction to *Friday the 13th.



Nancy Loomis as Annie in *Halloween*. No disagreement here—it was great!

detail, while others believe it is an informative guide to judge movies by. The show almost always has film clips you seldom see anywhere else, from most movies, but in the case of *Friday the 13th Part II,* there were no film clips to show. This smacked of controversy. Was Siskel's review of *Friday the 13th* that far reaching?

"They didn't make any film clips for any TV shows, so it wasn't *Sneak Previews* that was singled out, although we did make an additional request, as we usually do. We try not to show stuff that every other TV viewer around the country runs, and so we frequently get different clips, but they [Paramount] stiffed us, and stiffed everybody else around the country, to the best of my knowledge. And why? I think they really didn't have much confidence in their film, artistically. They just wanted the television commercials to do the selling. Obviously, if they had any pride in it, they would've made clips available. They're marketing it, knowing they have a piece of junk. They're embarrassed about it."

According to Siskel, *Sneak Previews,* which has had less problems than any other film reviewing program on television in obtaining film clips, hasn't lost its relationship with Paramount.

While we're at relationships and *Friday the 13th,* let's take a look at the reigning controversy, Siskel's *Friday the 13th* review which spawned so much action and reaction.

In the review, he suggested a letter campaign against Charles Bluhdorn at Paramount Pictures, for allowing a major movie operation to handle such a movie, and one toward Betsy Palmer who played the over-protective Mrs. Voorhees. What was his goal in so doing?

"I think sometimes when people engage in an activity, not only movies or TV, anything from being a baseball player, a movie critic, a freelance interviewer, a reader of a magazine, or a magazine publisher, I think frequently, they sometimes forget that anybody pays attention to what they do, or that their work may have an affect on people, and since I was disappointed by *Friday the 13th,* I guess I was just saying that people were upset with this film and others like it, and that if they want to speak out about it they can do wht I do, which is to write about it. Well, they don't work for newpapers, so I suggested who they could write to. See, I think it might be a healthy development if movie stars realized what they're doing, and that people will hold them accountable for what they do. I guess if they laugh their way to the back, I'd like them to be a little somber about what they do. I think that's perfectly reasonable. We write about and give praise to people all the time, so I don't think there's anything wrong with somebody writing and complaining about what he or she doesn't like. I get requests for letters to movie stars, so I'm just suggesting that here's a way for all you Betsy Palmer fans to let her know what you think of what she did. As much as I am opposed to censorship, I'm totally in favor of people's freedom to write letters or even picket in front of films. They have a perfect right to do that."

And just how large a response did his letter campaign draw?

"I don't know. That you'd have to check with those people . . . I got a few carbons. I mentioned Mr. Bluhdorn's name again in my column for *Friday the 13th Part II,* and I got a number of carbons, but I don't know how many were sent."

To regular readers of FANGORIA, it was somewhat surprising to see Editor Bob Martin ask for his own letter campaign, which he explains as a way of putting the shoe on the other foot, so to speak. How did Siskel feel about having a campaign directed at him?

"I smiled when I read it, I thought it was clever. I was amused that they spelled my editor's name wrong. I'm unaware of receiving any letter. Either he didn't receive any, or he didn't pass any on to me."

In the wake of the editorial (issue 8), Martin claims that hundreds of readers had written in, either damning or praising

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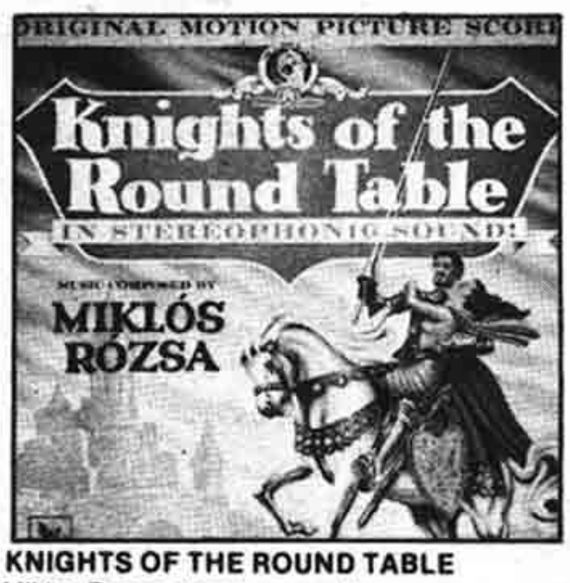

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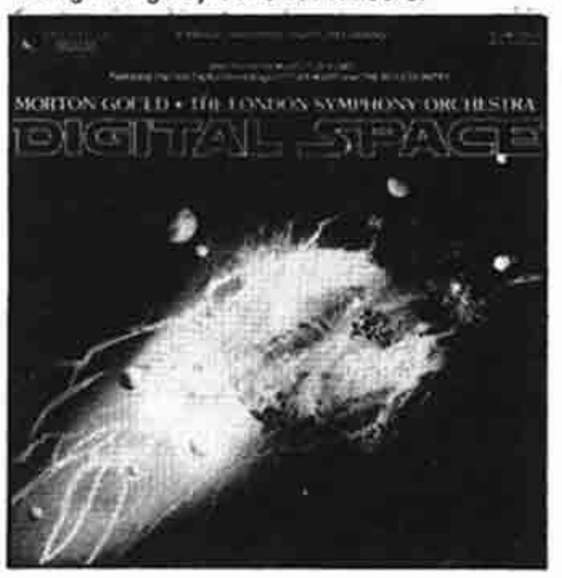

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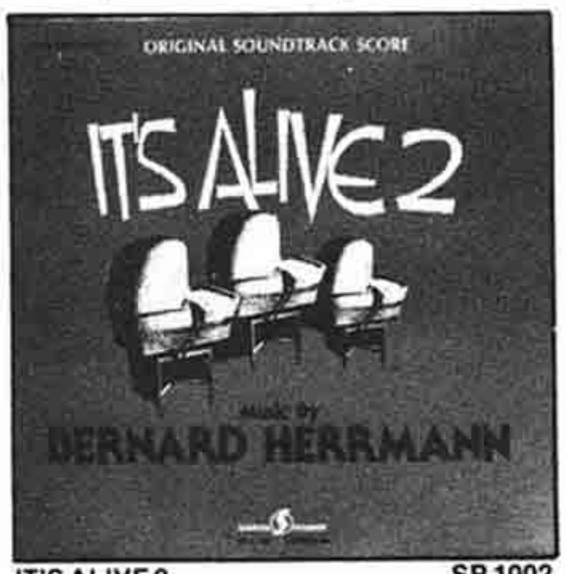

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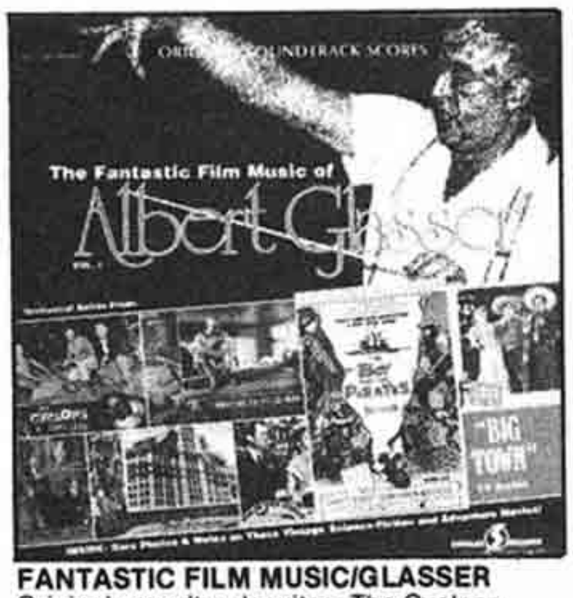

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Siskel for his sense of values and taste, or lack thereof, depending on the reader's personal opinion. How does he feel about this?

"Well, obviously, I think the people who are in favor of what I've written are quite intelligent, and the people who are not are stupid." He is quick to point out that that remark was made in jest. "I think they are wrong on this one issue, and they might be perfectly intelligent in every other way. I feel very secure on what I've written on the subject, and to me, the letters I've received (not. related to FANGORIA) are just an overwhelming response in favor of my views . . . it's easily 20 or 30 to one. There have been hundreds of letters every week, and the reason they come in every week is that there's a new horror film every week. And most of them are pretty bad. I didn't notice if FANGORIA had anything to say about my praise of *The Howling*. Not that I care, I'm just curious. In other words, they [FANGORIA] can use me in whatever way they want. That's just a fact. Let me put it another way . . . they can have a knee-jerk, negative reaction to me, but I won't be having a knee-jerk, negative reaction to horror films."

Turning now to the MPAA, there is a shake-up taking place at the Motion Picture Association of America, which rates the bulk of the movies shown in the United States [see last issue.] A possible suggestion for a new rating system is "V" for violence, which would lessen the current broadness of the "R". Ebert explains.

"Well, it's interesting that at the present moment you can have a movie like *Ordinary People,* and a movie like *I Spit On Your Grave* both getting an R rating. The rating system seems to believe that four-letter words are just as offensive as mutilation, decapitation, and emasculation, and all the other things that you find in those kind of violent movies. If the rating system is intended as a guide, I think that the R rating in particular has grown so broad as to encompass almost everything. Hardly any movies except porno movies are rated X anymore. Harldy any movies except an extremely innocuous one are PG or G.

PHOTO: © 1981 AVCO EMBASSY PICTURES

Don McLeod, *The Howling*. OK by Ebert.

PHOTO: © 1980 MANIAC PRODUCTIONS

Joe Spinnell is beside himself over *Maniac* reviews.

Most of these films seem to occupy the R stratum which means that the R has grown so large as to become useless as a category. Perhaps adding a V for violence, or some other kind of rating might help."

I asked what he felt an X, which is what certain films such as *Dawn of the Dead* and *Mother's Day* would've gotten had they not gone unrated, should or does constitute.

"I have trouble understanding the X category, and how I would apply it if I were the Rating Code administrator. At times, I wonder whether there should be such a thing, and every once in a while, when I see a picture like *Maniac,* I think there should be one. Up until recently, I've been pretty much opposed to the X rating, but in the past couple of years I've seen films that have so turned me off, and the violence has been so exaggerated, that the films themselves are moving into a new category, and they're almost demanding to be treated as a new category, which it *is*, as demonstrated by the fact that you're interviewing me about it. It goes beyond the pale of horror and into total vulgarity. In fact, it's becoming films about cutting up of bodies rather than anything else. I want to single them out for special attention . . . I'm not hedging, but that X really bugs me. I get much more concerned about those films."

Both critics like the two Romero "Living Dead" films, and *Halloween*. But these movies portray the staple of the current horror trend, excessive graphic content a/or women in trouble. So, if there is to be an X or a V applied to certain horror movies, where is that fine line between R and X or V?

"I don't know," Ebert concedes, "I believe you can't get an X rating without showing genitals. And indeed, not only genitals, but sexual intercourse. Without that, you don't get the X rating, so therefore everything is R except those things which are innocuous enough to get PG or G. And the reason that a movie like *Ordinary People* is R is because of its language. So I don't think there is a fine line, I think we have a category that is so large that almost everything fits into it.

"I don't think Carpenter had much of a problem for the rating of his film [*Halloween*], the bad directors are gross-out artists. I think it's pretty obvious when someone has to resort to a shotgun blast at close range and a head blowing apart in slow motion, they don't have much of a brain when it comes to filmmaking. This is a slightly different issue . . . if a person can believe, honestly believe that anybody has a right to see anything, that a five year old kid can watch anything . . . some believe it. There are many great filmmakers who are dedicated to turning out good movies, without turning them into 'pukeshows'. I really don't think there's much of a limitation to put on people, and by the way, I'm not putting any limitations on people, they can do whatever they want. however, in my opinion, if there's going to be an X rating, some of these films belong in it." This last sentence is somewhat reminiscent of his review for *Friday the 13th:*

"If any film shoud be X rated on the basis of violence, this is it." Siskel admitted during the interview that he was also presently working on a rating story, and that he was still sorting out the issue.

Is the X rating, which is putting pressure on some of the established directors, like Carpenter, Cronenberg, DePalma, and Romero, also making it harder for the new directors to get a start in the field of hor-

ror? Roger's answer . . .

Well, for example, *Dawn of the Dead* would have been X rated, but Romero bypassed the rating system, and himself rated it as an adults-only film, and released it that way. That didn't seem to have hurt the grosses of *Dawn of the Dead* at all. *Halloween* wouldn't have been X rated, I don't believe . . . neither would *Dressed to Kill*. We're talking about extrememly violent films. *Halloween* would've been an R rated film under any system. The purpose of making a film is not to have us sitting around trying to see these directors get starts. Presumably the film is supposed to be good enough that it's worth paying the money to go see, and that it's going to entertain us. If that's the case, then the director has done his job."

Siskel feels that any subject can be redeemed by an artful treatment, "I think that there's obvious intelligence and filmmaking style, and a joy of creation connected with the two Romero films and *Halloween*, and *Dressed to Kill*, that is absent in so many of the other films. I have a feeling that most FANGORIA readers would agree with me that those films are better than such films as *Friday the 13th I and II, Schizoid, He Knows You're Alone, Maniac, New Year's Evil, My Bloody Valentine*, and *Happy Birthday To Me*. I think my taste is quite good, my critical abilities are functioning quite well when I divide the films into two categories, the ones I did like, and the ones I didn't."

The May, 1981 issue of *Playboy* magazine brings up the theory that it is usually the good independent female who survives at the end of the horror movie, and that this is a good, positive virtue for women. Gene responds.

"I don't know that that's accurate, but what I can say on the subject is that women in these horror movies get into trouble because they are independent. In other words, I think that the clear message to these films is, and you can add *I Spit on Your Grave* in the negative category, that if you do act independently you'll be sliced up. The overwhelming amount of screen time has predicated on that, that if girls, you have sex before you're married, you'll be cut up, and if you don't, if you choose to not have sex before marriage, you'll get cut up for that too. It's not even a question of before you're married. If you choose to have sex at all. Understand that the distinction is not being made by me, but rather by the films. I'm not saying whether or not somebody should have sex before marriage, the films are."

Both Siskel and Ebert were asked about the fact that Ebert recently wrote an article for *American Film* magazine about the dangers of going to see a movie due to violence and sex, when it was Roger who wrote the script *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*, a violent movie that included a pistol-rape scene.

"He could've changed his opinion," Siskel offered, "I think he did the film about ten years ago, you'd have to ask him. If he says his opinion's changed then that would get him off the hook."

"*Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*," Ebert explains, "is not particularly violent except in a couple of scenes. I have never said that any particular subject matter should be off bounds per se, I believe the director should be free to make a movie about anything. The point is, does the director redeem the subject matter by his approach, by his style. Movies like *I Spit on Your Grave* are simply exploitation films. I persist in believing that *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls* was an extremely funny movie, and that it was also satirical, and that it was entertaining. Richard Corliss, the film critic from Time Magazine picked it as among the ten best movies of the seventies. I'm not being hypocritical at all, I don't believe, to anyone who's prepared to listen to what I have to say. I've never said there should be violent movies and I never said there shouldn't be violence in movies. I've never said that."

Horror movies are about peaked. They can't go much further in popularity. Even a city like Buffalo, not generally known for turning out movies, has a horror movie out (*The Burning*). Why did these horror movies become so popular?

"They are not at the peak of their popularity," Ebert contends, "I was just talking to an exhibitor today who says that this summer's horror movies are not making it. And it seems to be the end of the cycle for horror movies. They became popular because they are very easy to make cheaply. They do not require stars, they do not require literate screenplays, they do not require talented directors . . . the good ones do have those things. But it seems that they are aimed primarily at an adolescent audience, and it gives younger teenagers something to do Friday night. I think that a lot of teenaged kids are really afraid of good movies. They are going out on dates and it takes a certain amount of nerve to ask a girl if she wants to see *Atlantic City* or something like that. So it's kind of peer pressure, or socially safer to say 'Let's just go to this horror movie'. I think a lot of the people going in know they're not going to be good, but that's okay because they're socially approved as being kind of a pastime where you can sit there and scream, and it's all very predictable and bloody, and then afterwards, you've seen a movie. I think that even the audiences for these films have finally got bored to death with them. And that's why business is falling off. Nothing has happened that is worse to the tradition of the great horror movie than these rip-offs of the last two years."

So there you have it . . . two men who are not well liked for the most part, in the FANGORIA readership circle, have told us their views, and explained why they've done certain things. This is probably an open invite for a flood of letters, but that's okay, controversy has always been the better part of magazine/reader relations. So get out your pens, pencils, or typewriters, and fire away.

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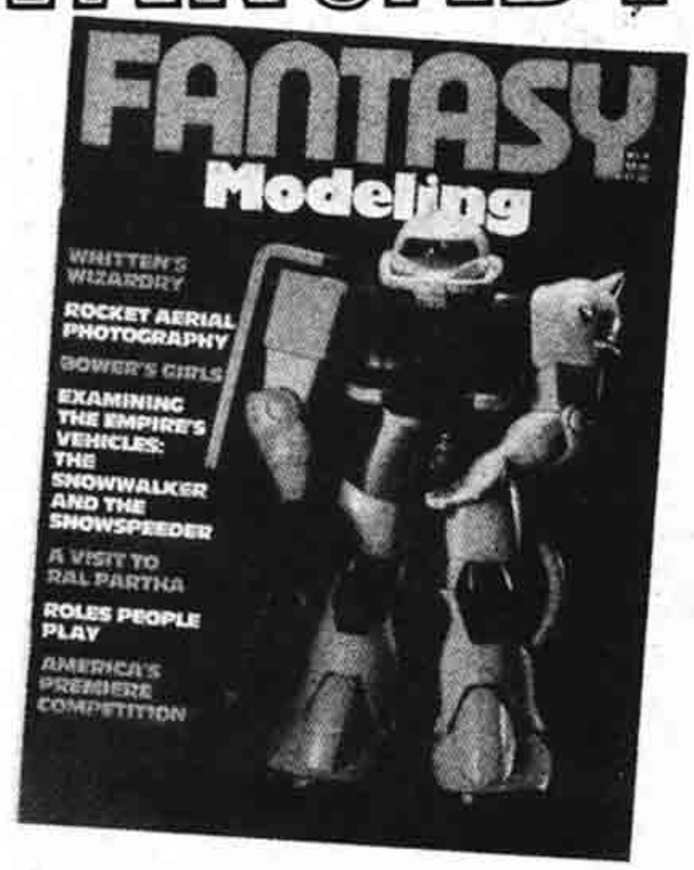

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The Pit and the Pen
of Alex Gordon

The recurring theme of the ventriloquist and his dummy is an intriguing one in the movies, going back to the 1929 production of *The Great Gabbo*, the British omnibus film *Dead of Night*, the Richard Gordon version of *Devil Doll*, Joseph E. Levine's *Magic*, and the multitude of television shows that have used the idea, like *Outer* include voice impersonations, there is Carol Reed's marvellous rare British thriller *Talk of the Devil* with Ricardo Cortez and Sally Eilers, the great Lon Chaney Senior portraying a woman and doing her voice in his only talkie, *The Unholy Three*, and Lionel Barrymore doing the same female act in MGM's weird *Devil Doll* of 1936.

The Great Gabbo starred Erich von Stroheim, Betty Compton, Don Douglas, and Margie Kane with Eddy Waller. It was adapted from a story by Ben Hecht and directed by James Cruze for Sono-Art World Wide Pictures. Von Stroheim, director and star of many famous silent films, acted in several horror type stories later including *The Lady and the Monster* for Republic and *The Crime of Dr. Crespi*. Betty Compton was a star of silent films and Don Douglas later played the title role in Columbia's *Deadwood Dick* serial. Eddy Waller became Allan 'Rocky' Lane's sidekick in Republic westerns after a long career as a character actor. James Cruze had directed *The Covered Wagon*, a landmark 1924 silent production, among other top films, and screenwriter Ben Hect was responsible for *Viva Villa*, *Scarface*, *The Scoundrel*, *Crime without Passion* and an enviable score of other well-remembered movie titles.

Gabbo is an egotistical ventriloquist who not only talks to his dummy, Otto, in his dressing room, but takes him to restaurants for meals where he is able to throw his voice so that Otto speaks even while consuming food or having a large silken cloth stuffed in his mouth. Gabbo abuses Mary, his assistant, who pretends to like the dummy because Otto is 'the better self' of the ventriloquist and she warns him, after his constant boasts of 'his act' and 'his work' that he will only take out of life what he has put into it. Too late Gabbo discovers his desperate love for Mary. In a poignant scene he remembers the coffee she serves him. "Not too hot—not too cold—just right!" Unable to stand his raging outbursts, she has left him. The ventriloquist believes that he is so expert at throwing his voice that he has endowed the doll with a soul. His mind becomes unhinged.

PHOTO: © 1978 20TH CENTURY-FOX

Anthony Hopkins shares the stage with his malevolent partner, Fats, in *Magic*.

Dead of Night, the British 1946 classic, has members of a tea party at an English country home telling each other their supernatural and uncanny experiences. The six episodes are highlighted by one presenting Michael Redgrave as a ventriloquist with a pathological obsession that another man is attempting to steal his dummy, Hugo, by alienating the latter's affection for him. He shoots his rival and, in prison, destroys Hugo in a fit of jealousy, slips into catalepsy and assumes the dummy's voice. Directed by the Italian Cavalcanti, better known for his documentaries, *Dead of Night* is often revived but mainly remembered for this episode.

In Richard Gordon's 1964 production of *Devil Doll* directed by Lindsay Shonteff from a screenplay by George Barclay and Lance Z. Hargreaves from an original story by Frederick E. Smith, Bryant Haliday—who also starred in Gordon's *The Projected Man* and *Curse of Voodoo*—portrays The Great Vorelli.

Vorelli, an awe-inspiring mesmerist, is in London for a theatrical engagement. The 'star' performer in his sensational act is his dummy, 'Hugo', a creature of wood apparently able to walk and talk unaided with no visible control from its master. But Vorelli's control over Hugo is both powerful and sinster, and the dummy is kept locked in a steel cage after each performance.

Mark English (played by William Sylvester), a journalist assigned to write an article about Vorelli, takes his fiance, Marianne (Yvonne Romain), a wealthy young society beauty, to see his act. At Mark's urging, she volunteers to be one of Vorelli's 'victims,' but she falls under his hypnotic influence when he is irresistibly attracted to her.

At a charity ball, Mark is able to watch Vorelli at close quarters. That night, Vorelli commands Marianne to come to him in a hypnotic trance while Mark, tossing fitfully in the grip of a nightmare, imagines that Hugo comes to his room to plead for help. When Marianne becomes seriously ill, Mark is convinced that Vorelli, in some evil way, is responsible. He starts investigations into Vorelli's past. In the meantime, Magda (Sandra Dorne), Vorelli's assistant in his stage act, jealously accuses him of becoming infatuated with Marianne. Later that night, in the desertd theater, Hugo's cage is empty ... and Magda is mysteriously stabbed to death.

Mark's intensified investigations lead him to Berlin and Mercedes, a once-beautiful dancer who had been a member of Vorelli's act. From Mercedes, he hears the unbelievable story of Vorelli's early experiments in hypnotism; of how she and her partner, Hugo, fell under his sinister spell until one night, Hugo was killed during a stage performance which the police accepted as an accident.

Mark further learns Vorelli was once a medical student who was expelled from his profession, and that he disappeared for years in the East, studying the secrets of the mind.

Mark returns to London, convinced that the two Hugos are one—the human soul of a murdered man, imprisoned in the

wooden body of a dummy. In the meantime, Vorelli's affair with Marianne has progressed and she informs her aunt that she will marry him and they will go away together. But Vorelli's fanatic concentration on Marianne weakens his control over Hugo, and the dummy breaks free from his master's control. A sinister battle between them is interrupted by the arrival of Mark, who is startled to see a smashed doll lying on the floor, a doll in the likeness of Marianne that was being prepared to imprison her soul for the creation of another devil doll. In the final showdown, Vorelli is defeated—but Mark is witness to a scene of such nightmarish fear that he knows nobody will ever believe him or accept the truth if he tries to tell his story to the world.

Bryant Haliday studied international law at Harvard University and little dreamed that a State Department career would be foresworn for miming on stage and before the camera. Born in New York, he was involved in the distribution of foreign films and then moved to Paris, living on a houseboat on the Seine.

The Canadian film *Something's Rotten*, produced by Hazelton Productions in

PHOTO: COURTESY ALEX GORDON

Film pioneer von Strohein, *The Great Gabbo*.

1979, shows a series of horror-filled events that overtake the Queen's palace in Castle Carian, a central European monarchy. Her relationship with the Prime Minister, who is trying to dethrone her, is complicated by his relationship with one of her twin sons, both of whom are heirs to her throne. Everyone loves George, the eldest, because he is both handsome and mediocre. Calvin, his brother, remains a mystery to everybody, including his mother. Calvin's club foot and speech impediment endear him to no one but his puppet, who in a schizophrenic manner takes on a persona of its own. The emergence of Calvin's puppet as a personality heralds the brutal murders of the Queen's cat and George's tutor. The murderer remains unrevealed, even after the probings of a psychiatrist.

PHOTO: COURTESY RICHARD GORDON

Voodoo meets ventriloquism in Richard Gordon's *Devil Doll*, with Bryant Haliday.

When the Queen finally thinks she has things licked with the help of her son, events take a turn for the worst. She does learn one thing, though—too many cooks spoil the broth. Charlotte Blunt, Geoffrey Bowes, Chris Barry, Rudy Weiss, Irene Hogan and Cec Linder appear in this 90 minute color horror film produced by David Eustace and Nancy E. White and directed by Harvey Frost from a screenplay by Norman Fox.

Rod Serling wrote "The Dummy" episode of his TV series *Twilight Zone* which was directed by Abner Bieberman and starred Cliff Robertson, Frank Sutton, George Murdock, John Harmon, Sandra Warner, Ralph Manza, Rudy Dolan and Bethelynn Grey. A cut-rate ventriloquist starts believing that his dummy actually has a mind—and a will—of its own. Serling based this show on a story by Leon Polk.

Joseph E. Levine's *Magic* was a 1978 Twentieth Century-Fox release directed by former actor Richard Attenborough who, in such films as *Brighton Rock*, *Eight O'Clock Walk* and *The Man Upstairs*, had shown his understanding of characters with psychological problems. With a screenplay by best-selling writer William Goldman and photographed in Technicolor by Victor J. Kemper, *Magic* starred Anthony Hopkins as a failed magician who finds he has a great talent for ventriloquism and, with his dummy, Fats, becomes a star. As in the earlier films referred to in this article, the dummy gradually becomes the dominant member of the act and takes over the personality of his master. he turns down a lucrative television contract and murders his agent, Burgess Meredith, when the latter discovers the extent of his psychosis. Fleeing to his home in upstate New York, Hopkins finds a former childhood sweetheart, portrayed by Ann-Margret, and romances her over the objection of her husband, Ed Lauter. There is a disastrous conclusion.

In vaudeville, western movies, on radio and in lighter television, the ventriloquist and his dummy have been presented in a more amusing manner. Probably the most famous was Edgar Bergen, with Charlie McCarthy and Mortimer Snerd, while Max Terhune and his dummy Elmer were popular with the Saturday matinee crowd. Way-

PHOTO: COURTESY TWILIGHT ZONE MAGAZINE/ITHACA COLLEGE

Cliff Robertson in Serling's "The Dummy."

land Flowers and Madame, Shari Lewis, and the Muppets are latter day followers of the art. But the movies continue to return to the world of the obsessed and the psychopath, and in 1981 producer Richard Gordon will bring to the screen a story more unusual and terrifying than any of those mentioned above with the tentative title of *Dummy*. Prepare yourselves!

Alex welcomes your letters of comment, inquiry and requests for film coverage. Address your letters to Alex Gordon, FANGORIA, 475 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016.

Debra Hill

(Continued from Page 19)

scene for a wide variety of imaginative deaths. In discussing the style in which the deaths are filmed, Hill is reminded of *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. "A real example of audience manipulation is the scene where Leatherface puts a girl on a meathook. You don't see any blood, you don't see the meathook entering the skin; he obviously put her on top of an apple-crate. But I die, I just die when I see that.

"There's really no blood in any of it, but the sound of that saw drives me crazy; I've never been able to stay to the end."

The frights in *Halloween II* will depend largely on the viewer's imagination—as was successfully done in *Halloween*. "I think that people will imagine more in their own minds than any filmmaker will ever show them," says Hill.

Hill admits, however, that such generalizations don't always prove entirely true. "On *The Fog*, which we tried to make into an old-fashioned ghost story, when we saw our first cut, we looked at it and realized that it wasn't strong enough. We went back and shot four more minutes; Adrienne on top of the lighthouse with 'Wormface' and all that."

Here our conversation devolved into a discussion of Carpenterian trivia with no particular point to it—but you might like to know that: Debra Hill's hands were so successful playing the part of young Michael's hands in *Halloween* that they were brought back in *The Fog* to play Stevie Wayne's hands in the scene where the gauze is pulled away from Wormface. Hill recalls putting the worms in place for the take, as well. In *Escape from New York*, John Carpenter is seen in one scene, playing guitar and kazoo. However, the kazoo heard on the soundtrack is actually played by Debra Hill. Dean Cundey, director of photography, plays the saw, associate producer Barry Bernardi plays the violin, and Nick Castle, who co-wrote the film and was seen as the beachball alien in *Dark Star*, and as Michael in most of *Halloween*, plays the piano. The troupe of transvestite entertainers who sing Castle's composition, "Everyone's Coming to New York," actually work together on the West Coast as The Low Moan Spectacular.

With that out of our system, we went on to more serious questions—like that of artistic control. The reputations of both Dino de Laurentiis and Irwin Yablans are laced with stories concerning what some call "creative input" and others call "interference."

"On *Halloween II*, we have total, 100% control. The only way they could do the deal was to grant us that control. Irwin Yablans is not allowed on the set, not allowed to see dailies, and has no control whatsoever. Dino de Laurentiis is allowed to see dailies. I don't like to show dailies, especially when other people are in the room, so I show them to him on Saturday.

PHOTO: KIM GOTTLIEB © 1980 AVCO EMBASSY PICTURES

Debra Hill and Jamie Lee Curtis on the set of *The Fog*.

The first Saturday he came to see dailies, he wanted to see cut footage. I said, 'I'm sorry, but nobody sees cut footage, not even you. You've got to give the director the chance to edit the film.' He says, 'I don't like you anymore—who do you think you are, Fellini? Fellini lets me see cut footage—Zeffirelli—Truffaut . . .' He went on and on, a big fight over the phone. So I figured, I'll fix him . . . I sent him six hours of hallway; empty corridors, or people running up and down hallways, over and over . . . he doesn't want to see dailies anymore."

As John Carpenter told us last issue, there were no circumstances under which he would direct the *Halloween* sequel. For a time, it was considered that Hill might make her directorial debut on the film. "I really didn't want to start with a sequel in a John Carpenter film. I'd like to start with an original," she says. About a year ago, Hill had told us that she was hoping to direct the film adaptation of *Clue*, the Parker Brothers board game—but Hill is now in negotiation with another, unnamed director for the *Clue* project. "I wasn't able to get Universal and Polygram to go with me," Hill says with resignation. But there will be other projects . . . I want to do a war film called *Kamikaze*."

Hill's ideas for *Kamikaze* are inspired by the public events restrictions imposed on California in the early years of World War II, specifically the fact that the annual Rose Bowl football game was not held in 1942 for fear of military activity by the Japanese on the Pacific coast. Hill's scenario speculates on what might have happened if a crack kamikaze troupe had been assigned to attack the Rose Bowl in 1943, the year that the restrictions were eased.

Before we actually thought to ask the obvious question, Hill told us that her script for *Kamikaze* was written before Steven Spielberg started work on *1941*. Hill dismisses any similiarities in the conceptions as coincidence, occurring "for the same reasons that he came up with *Raiders of the Lost Ark* when we came up with *Escape from New York*. We are all from the same era. We were all brought up on the same movies, the same TV, the same ideals and fantasies. We all want to make entertainment films—we're not from the school of *Ordinary People* and *Norma Rae*."

Hill is not the only member of the Carpenter clan headed for a directorial career. Nick Castle has recently completed *TAG (The Assassination Game)*, a suspense film concerning a "game" that becomes deadly serious; Tommy Wallace is currently developing a sequel to *The Amityville Horror* that, if it does happen, will probably outscare the original; and Joe Alves, production designer on *Escape from New york*, may be directing *Fangs*, a snakes-on-the-loose tale, from a script by John Carpenter and Bill Gilmore.

Hill's solo career will not prevent her from rejoining Carpenter on future projects. In addition to the two Avco Film projects mentioned above, there's still *El Diablo*, their much-postponed weird western. As we mentioned last issue, a recent obstacle placed in the path of that film is a casting disagreement. "After *Escape from New York*, we decided we wanted Kurt Russell to star in *El Diablo*," says Hill. "Barry Spikings (of EMI) said no, absolutely not. We showed him cut footage of *Escape*, told him that we thought he was making a big mistake . . . he came back with eight names that he thinks will be good for us, and one of them's John Travolta. He also wanted to know if the laughs in *Escape* were intentional. And another thing—John is going to Spain with Dean Cundey to look at locations, but we don't want to make a Spanish western. This film should be shot in Arizona, in the American West."

As Hill is undoubtedly aware, all of the British film industry is running scared these days, afraid to take chances. But it is this very timidity that is systematically killing off creativity in British film, and driving the country's native filmmakers to television or to Hollywood. This is especially obvious in EMI's recent output—tepid Agatha Christie adaptations "insured" by the presence of plenty of name stars, the similiarly-molded *The Mirror Crack'd*, and

Something doesn't smell quite right when Loomis (Donald Pleasance) is called in to identify a corpse in *Halloween II*.

PHOTO: KIM GOTTLIEB © 1981 DINO DE LAURENTIIS

In the same film, a young boy is victimized by a sadistic Halloween "prank."

EMI's half-hearted attempt at a horror film, *The Awakening*. In this light, their deal with Carpenter and Hill seems like more of an attempt to corral two more big names rather than a sincere effort to utilize their talents.

Unless some other signs are shown, it could very well be that the EMI deal might collapse, and *El Diablo* suffer yet another prolonged delay. Not too bad for fans of the work of Carpenter and Hill, they have plenty of projects cooking, but unfortunate for all of the western fans left unsatisfied by flawed efforts like *The Long Riders* (great music by Ry Cooder, though) and *Comes A Horseman*.

"The story concerns a young man, a schoolteacher, named Billy Ray," says Hill, "and a group of bandidos that live in a cave that conceals an entire underground city. At night these bandidos come out and ravage the surrounding towns. They come to a town called Independence and they steal all the kids from a school, including Billy Ray's sister, leaving behind their mark, the El Diablo brand. At first, no one is willing to pursue them, but Billy seeks out to find people willing to go with him." Eventually, Billy and his men venture into the town and, in the course of his search for his sister, Billy finds his manhood.

"It's like a rite of passage," says Hill, "which is why Kurt would be so great in that role, because he has the range. Not many actors could play both his character in *Used Cars* and Snake Plissken, and this role requires all of that."

As for the possibility of a 3-D film in the Carpenter-Hill future, Hill's words were not entirely encouraging.

"We investigated a number of 3-D processes for *Halloween*," she says, "but they were far too expensive for this particular project. Also, most of the projects we do involve a lot of night shooting—evil lurks at night. It's hard to do that in 3-D."

Again, we were interrupted by a ringing phone—this time from another journalist, due for her own interview with Hill. We spent our last few moments trying to convice Hill that 3-D wasn't all that expensive, to little avail.

Then we found ourselves back in the hubbub of the New York streets, and realized that, for the first time, we had fallen a little bit in love with a film producer.

The Harryhausen Story

We continue our in-depth discussion with the master of Dynamation!

By LARRY FRENCH

Editor's note: In the second of three parts, Harryhausen speaks about the scores of his films, and about the need for a proper approach to fantastic cinema-storytelling. Next issue's conclusion will include a complete guide to Harryhaysen's feature films.

FANG: Bernard Herrman did several marvelous scores for your films, starting when you got him for *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad.*

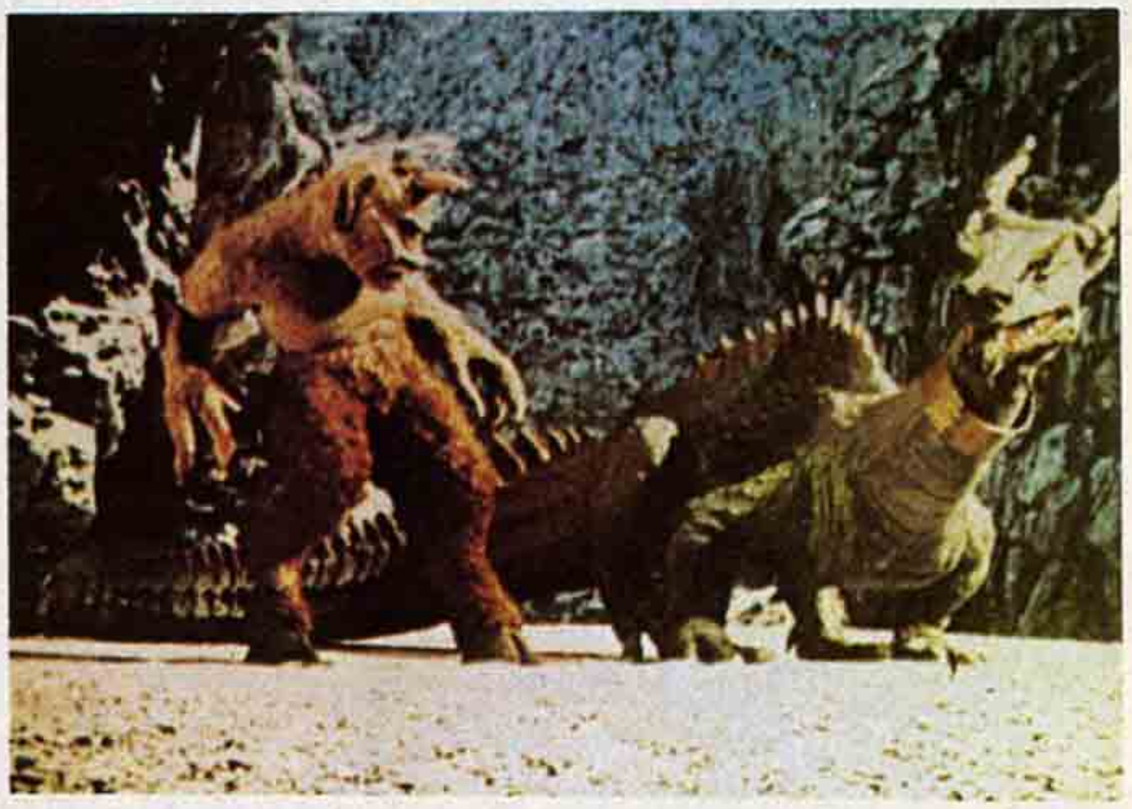
HARRYHAUSEN: Yes, as you know this type of picture requires an enormous amount of music, and Bernard Herrmann was ideal. He was one of those rare souls who had a great affinity for this type of picture. He knew exactly what type of music would accentuate the scenes. He was a great pleasure to work with, and we went on to do four pictures together.

FANG: What about Miklos Rozsa, who scored *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad*? I thought he did a mavelous score, and was rather suprised you haven't used him again.

HARRYHAUSEN: Yes, but that's asking a lot from a person, to do another Arabian Knights picture right after the first one. There are just so many interpretations of Arabic music. But there could be many reasons . . . unavailability or various other things, but did you like the music to this one?

FANG: I thought it was very good, though not on the level of a Herrmann, or a Rozsa.

HARRYHAUSEN: I thought Laurence Rosenthal did a magnificent job. He had done *Becket* and several others. It's a different interpretation, of course. Rozsa's style was different, his was a more romantic style, while Herrmann had a more angry style. It was a underlying, almost Wagnerian sound. They have different styles and interpretations though. Jerome Moross, for instance did *Gwangi*, and that



PHOTOS: © COLUMBIA PICTURES

Left, top and bottom: *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad*. John Phillip Law's sword battle with the Cyclopean Centaur w included in the film's final release. Right, top and bottom: Cyclops vs. Dragon in *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*.

had a western concept, because he became very successful with *The Big Country*, and those type of scores.

FANG: What happened to John Barry's score for the film?

HARRYHAUSEN: Well that disintegrated, and unfortunately the advance posters and publicity came out, before the whole thing was consummated. There were many behind-the-scenes reasons, and we finally ended up using Laurence Rosenthal.

FANG: Well, although I like John Barry, some of his scores bring up associations with James Bond.

HARRYHAUSEN: Yes, quite, but we were impressed by his score for *The Lion in Winter*, which was of a classical nature, and that was one of the main reasons he was considered.

FANG: What about his score for the second *King Kong*? Any comments on that?

HARRYHAUSEN: Well, no.

FANG: What about the film?

HARRYHAUSEN: I musn't comment on that [laughing]. The second *King Kong* was not one of my favorite pictures. Let's leave it at that.

FANG: Weren't there plans for a *Kong* remake at Hammer?

HARRYHAUSEN: Yes, they were looking into it, but couldn't get the rights. I was interested up to the point of what direction the script would have taken, because so many companies like to make send-ups of classics such as that.

FANG: Like *Flash Gordon*.

HARRYHAUSEN: Yes, quite. I've always been against send-ups. To me they're an apology for not knowing what to do with the subject. I think the original *Flash Gordon*, even from the comic strip, was never meant to be tongue-in-cheek, but because of todays standards, I suppose they felt it was necessary to do that.

FANG: Did Dino De Laurentiis approach you to do the effects for his version of *Kong*?

HARRYHAUSEN: I was approached in a vague sort of way. Two weeks before they were going to start shooting, I got a call from them, but it takes us a year of pre-production on our pictures, so I couldn't see getting involved with that. I don't think you can take a classic like *King Kong*, unless you take it almost scene for scene, and use Max Steiner's score. It's too much of a classic which has an identity all its own. Even the shifting of the hair. I mean, Rick Baker made a marvelous gorilla suit, but because the hair didn't shift, why it wasn't Kong. It was just a big Gorilla. It didn't have the fantasy elements that the first Kong had, and I think that's why people expected more from it than they got. it was a product of publicity.

FANG: Some people have the idea that these films are primarily for children.

HARRYHAUSEN: Absolutely not! I shudder every time I hear that. I think that overlooks many levels that are in these pictures. We've dealt with some rather complicated subjects such as reincarnation, black magic, telekinesis, and rather bizarre subjects. Hyperborea . . . people seem to think I invented Hyperborea, but you go back to ancient Greece, and the legends of Hyperborea are fabulous. And as Robert Armstrong said in *King Kong*, every legend has a basis in truth. I don't think *Clash of the Titans* will appeal only to children. We tried to make it broad enough to appeal on many different levels. I think there's a level for everybody. Adults will find it enjoyable, as well as the children. A character like Sinbad, though, for some reason is always identified with juvenile entertainment, and I don't know why, because Sinbad was the personification of adventure, rather than just a child's hero. We deal with the heros, and we try to go back to Greek mythology, because it lends itself so well to the dynamation medium. All these creatures are built in. You don't have to write them into the story for sensationalism; they're already there. You may have to manipulate them, but they are innate in the story itself, which I think is important. Greek mythology has lasted for two thousand years, there must be a reason for it. It's not just fairy tales . . . you can

PHOTOS: LARRY FRENCH / COURTESY MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

At New York's Museum of Modern Art: (top row, left to right) Harryhausen's concept art for a never-filmed adaptation of Wells' *Food Of The Gods*; the giant walrus from *Sinbad And The Eye Of The Tiger*; from the same film, Harryhausen's chess-playing baboon; (center, left to right) the goddess Kali from The Golden Voyage of Sinbad. From *Clash of The Titans*, the Kraken, Bubo the owl, Pegasus and the evil Calibos.

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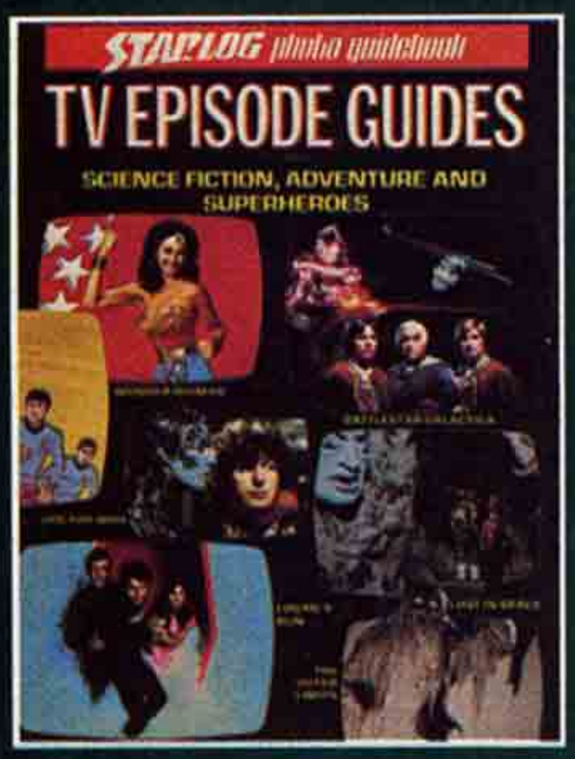

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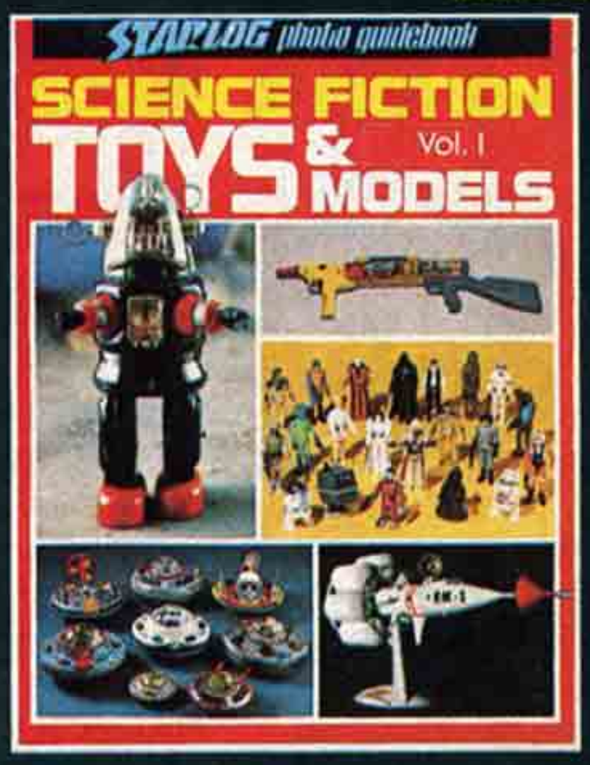

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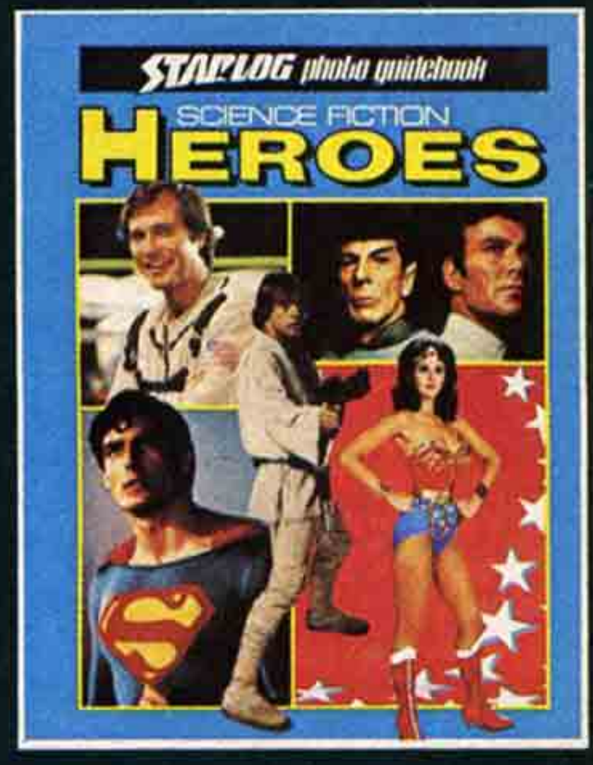

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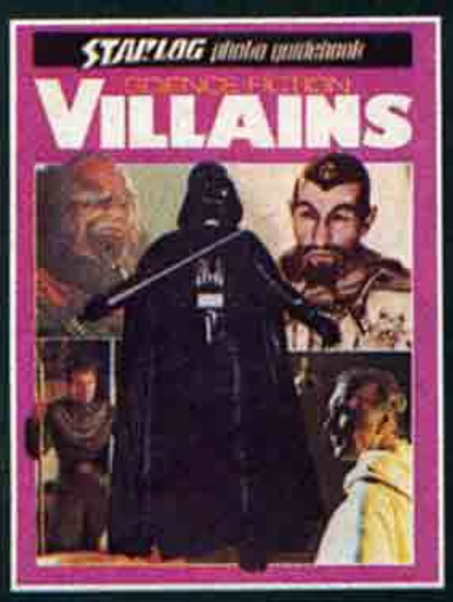

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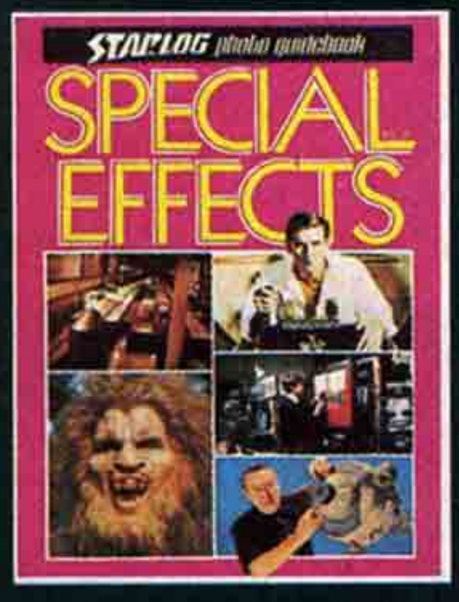

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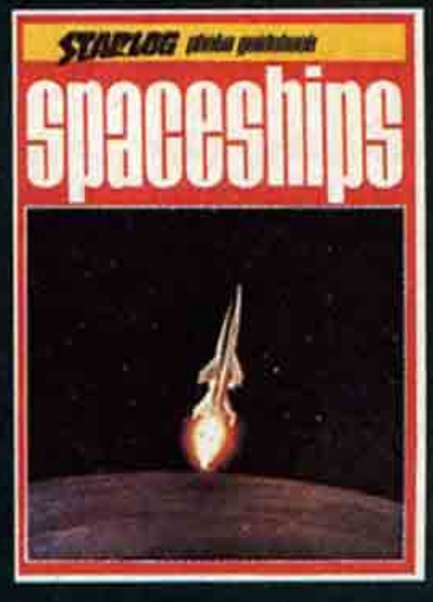

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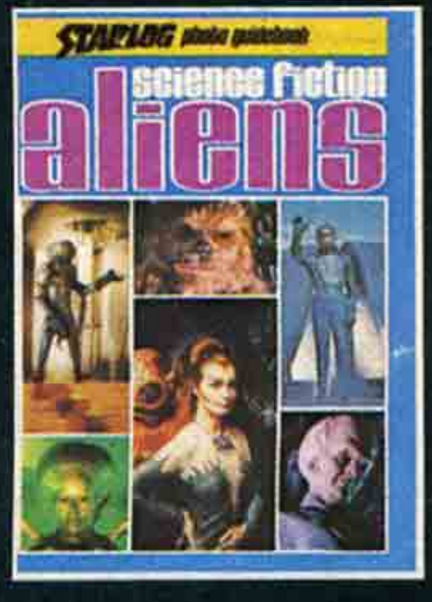

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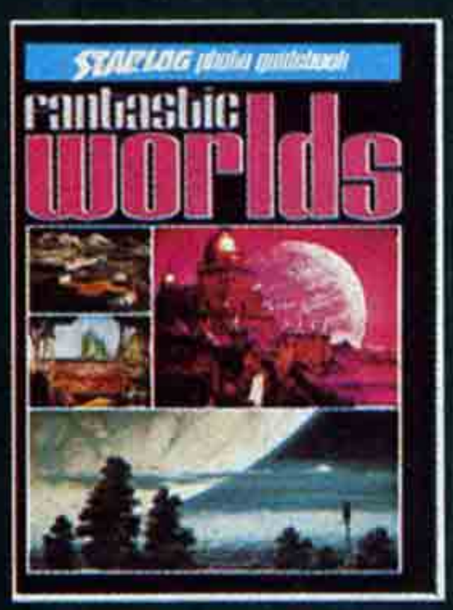

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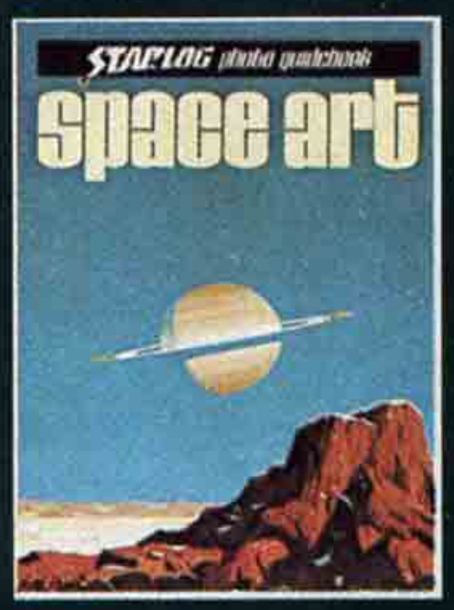

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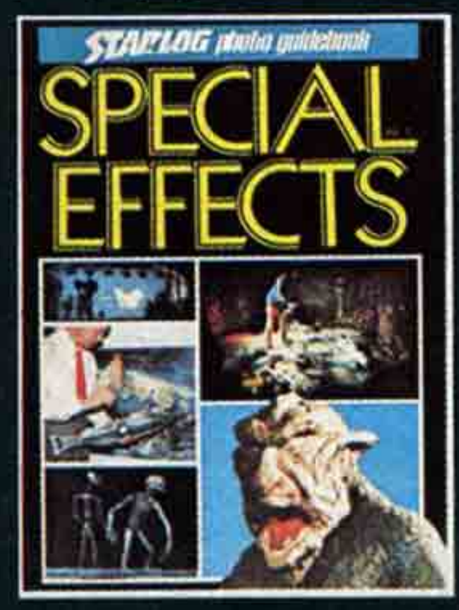

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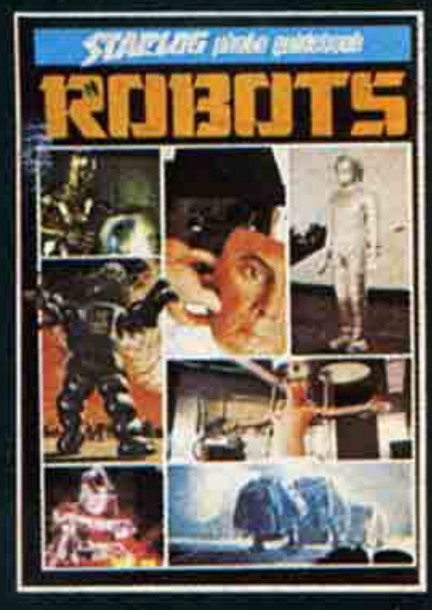

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read deeper meanings into it.

FANG: Too sophisticated in many aspects for children.

HARRYHAUSEN: Yes. There are those different planes, which I think many times are overlooked, simply because we have rather grotesque looking characters, which dominate the scene.

FANG: Of course many filmmakers and critics have a very cynical approach and can't believe in fantasy. They prefer realistic dramas, and feel fantasy is for children.

HARRYHAUSEN: But that's not true! An adult needs fantasy more than a child, I think. You get it kicked out of you at a certain age that these things are unreal, and that you shouldn't waste your time daydreaming about flying on the back of a winged horse, but my gosh, we went through that period where they had those depressing dramas of realism, and in England we call them the kitchen sink dramas, because your always looking in the kitchen sink, and the garbage can of despicable people, doing despicable things. You have those problems yourself, and if you're going to pay five dollars today, you don't want to be depressed when you come out of a picture . . . I don't, that's why I don't go as much anymore. My wife and I used to get so depressed with some of these sordid subjects, and to pay to be depressed is about the end I think. I can do that on my own.

FANG: Well now the pendulum has swung back.

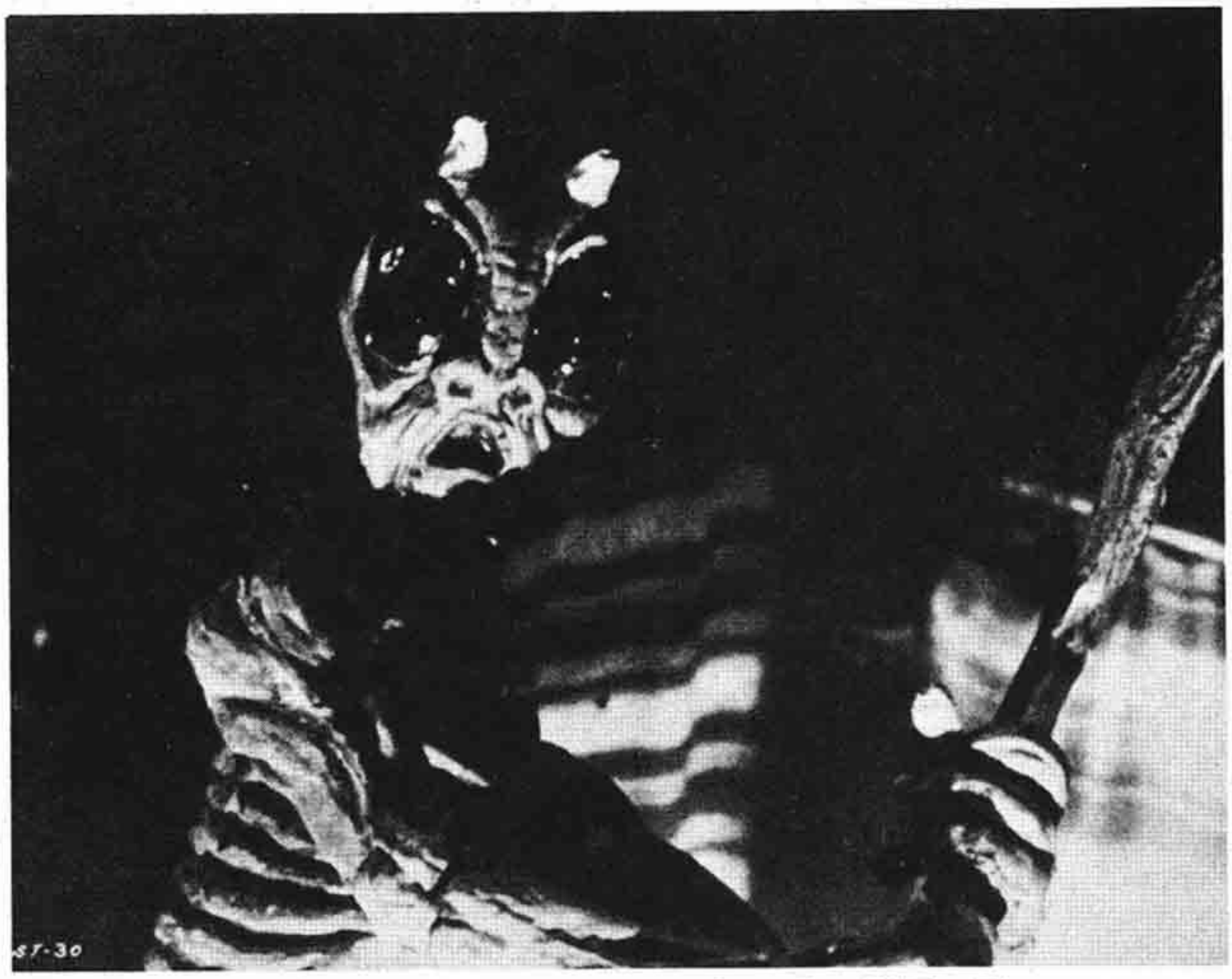
HARRYHAUSEN: Yes, and I think one of the big reasons why we went through that, is that great admiration for the so-called anti-hero. All of a sudden the hero was out, and the anti-hero was in. Of course if you talk about the pendulum, there must be a point where the anti-hero becomes the villian, and I think we reached that point, and every subject had to end on a downbeat ending, and life isn't all downbeat. Maybe for some people, but the people who made pictures in the forties, the big producers and studios had great imagination. When you look back at some of the pictures, they knew how to make the average person see things bigger than life for an hour and a half, which was a relief, or escape, which we all loved. But it's not just for kids. That's always worried me, that people think we just make films for children, although there's nothing wrong with that, but we'd like to reach a bigger audience, and stretch the imagination.

FANG: I think having a show at the Museum of Modern Art will convince many people who may have thought that in the past.

HARRYHAUSEN: Yes, and they want to extend the show all summer, it's so popular. They have about 30 of my original drawings, which they have mounted beautifully. I was most impressed. There's also 15 or 20 models of the characters from our previous films, as well as this one.

FANG: In the past decade you made only two films, while in the sixties you made six.

HARRYHAUSEN: Good Lord! I never added it up that way.



One of Sinbad's nastiest foes, a demonspawn from *Eye Of The Tiger*.

FANG: I know animation is a very laborious, time consuming process, but is there any reason for a four film difference?

HARRYHAUSEN: Our pictures take a long time to prepare of course. I don't know how to account for it really. We were more prolific then.

FANG: And you were younger then.

HARRYHAUSEN: Yes, quite [laughing].

FANG: Do you have any plans to retire?

HARRYHAUSEN: I don't know. The thought has crossed my mind.

FANG: Will you pass on your techniques to anyone?

HARRYHAUSEN: Oh people will pick it up. There are a lot of young animators. I know when I started out I couldn't find a kindred soul to even discuss animation, because nobody knew anything about it. Now we get letters from all over the world. I got a letter from Germany of some young people who were experimenting, because they saw so many of our films. They can't find backers, but if they're persistent, and they stick to it, I'm sure they will. Now there are books and magazines on the subject . . . exposes, Dynamation revealed, and all that sort of thing. I imagine it will appeal to those who have the tenacity. I know Jim Danforth, when he first came to my studio, he had experimented with things in his garage. He was a fan at that time, and he became a professional, and so did Dave Allen. A lot of them drop by the wayside though, when they find out how much work goes on, behind the scenes. It looks rather glamorous on the surface, when your finished, but it takes high concentration and patience is enormously important.

FANG: Your flair for secrecy has become fairly well known . . .

HARRYHAUSEN: [laughing] It's taken on proportions I never dreamt it would!

FANG: But there was a story, in *Cinefantastique*, about how you let Jim Danforth tour your studio when you were preparing *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*, and then he went off and made *Jack the Giant Killer*, supposedly having copied some of your work. Is that true?

HARRYHAUSEN: I can tell you in one word: Hogwash!

FANG: Why do you feel the need for such secrecy then?

HARRYHAUSEN: I tried to explain it in *Cinefantastique*, but it seemed to get misunderstood. I've always felt that this type of medium, of doing tricks, has been accused of just doing tricks for the sake of it. Well, we've always had to pick subjects that couldn't be photographed in the normal course of photography. We deliberately chose story book tales. I remember seeing the *Arabian Knights*, when I was very young, and the Maria Montez pictures, *Ali Baba and the Forty Thiefs*, but they always left the fantasy elements out! The only one that ever brought the fantasy elements in was the Korda *Thief of Bagdad*, which was a superb film. So I vowed right then and there, that every picture we made would stress the fantasy, rather than the cops & robbers, or gold hunts, and things like that. So we're creating illusions on the screen, we're not pretending that it's real, it's a surrealistic exercise, but if you go and tell everybody how the illusion was accomplished, I think, like a magician, nobody will be interested in you after that. I've lasted quite a few years on that principle [laughs]. Today, all these magazines, which tell all, destroy the illusion for the average person. Of course a lot of the fans

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***Great Lizards of the Cinema:* Above, concept art for the pterodactyl in *Valley of Gwangi* and the dragon in *7th Voyage* . . .**

love it, because they're trying to do that themselves.

FANG: Were you surprised by all the detailed coverage of the film then?

HARRYHAUSEN: Yes, but I have no control over that. The stills are given to certain departments, and it's an enormous organization, and you can't keep control over all of that.

FANG: Did you try to get together with Ray Bradbury on any projects after *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms?*

HARRYHAUSEN: We've been wanting to get together on projects for a good many years, but somehow destiny has not brought us together. He's either tied up on something when I'm free, although I've seldom been free I must say. I've been very lucky to have the continuity of films, I've had. We've often talked about what projects we'd like to do together.

FANG: Is there anything of his you'd particularly like to do?

HARRYHAUSEN: Yes, but I couldn't say, not at the moment, because somebody might jump the gun, to put it bluntly. I understand Disney is preparing his *Something Wicked This Way Comes,* which is great, because he had it underway for some time, just like his *Martian Chronicles,* which had been with MGM for about five years. He wrote, and wrote, and rewrote it for somebody else, and he was quite disappointed with it. Those things all take an evolution though.

FANG: How have you been able to maintain such a long working relationship with Charles Schneer?

HARRYHAUSEN: By never agreeing, I suppose [laughter]. We have been together for a long time. He has a great sympathy for fantasy, he always has. We've had many disagreements, which brings up that old saying, that if two people think exactly alike, one of them is unnecessary. So we battle out many things in the name of the film, and we come to a compromise.

FANG: Would you perhaps have differences in approach towards the actual animation, working with Jim Danforth?

HARRYHAUSEN: Of course any animator has to use his own judgement, because so many things appear on the set. Most of the horse sequence was laid out in storyboard form, but on the set, one pose will suggest another pose. I'd seen a horse he did some years go for a commercial he did while he was at Cascade. It was for a floor wax, and there was a herd of horses rushing across the floor, so I felt he would be the right man to do the Pegasus scenes, when he's in the air. He did Dioskilos, the two headed dog, and various bits and pieces of the Kraken, because we had spasmodic pieces of film shot for each sequence.

FANG: The Kraken is from Norwegian mythology isn't it?

HARRYHAUSEN: The name is, but the sea monster is from Greek mythology, because I don't believe in Greek mythology, that the sea monster who is supposed to devour Andromeda was ever named. So we borrowed the name from the legend of the great giant squids, of medieval times, when the sailors didn't really know what to call a squid, they simply called it a Kraken. John Wyndham, I believe wrote *The Kraken Wakes,* and several other stories have been written, but the Kraken is definitely a later name. We had to name it though, and we didn't want to call it Leviathan, or Behemoth from the Bible, so we decided to settle for the Kraken.

FANG: Is this the first time you've had assistance with the animation?

HARRYHAUSEN: Yes, I usually work alone, and there's a reason for that. It's a personal thing to me, rather than trying to broaden it out, like a cartoon where you can have a whole staff of people. The animator makes the broad moves, and his assistant makes the inbetweens, and his assistant does something else, and by the time it gets to the photographer you have a dozen people involved. I've never been able to make that work, but obviously that doesn't mean it can't work, in a mass produced form. So it's a means of personal expression, rather than mass-produced expression. Maybe like the dinosaur that will have to die out, because time waits for no one, and with these budgets, time is money. So you have deadlines, and you have to get these things out, which is why I took on help with this project. We had a young Englishman, as well as Jim Danforth who worked on the picture, Steven Archer. He had experimented a lot with clay figures, and I saw some of his work. He did three or four test subjects on his own, just for fun, under very distressing circumstances, and I thought he could work out as well. Of course, I'm involved with other things besides the animation. When you're doing high-speed photography you just can't do that alone. I have to plan the whole thing, such as the flooding of Argos. I had to design all that so nobody would be hurt. We used high speed miniatures, which comes under my jurisdiction, and the opticals, and many various things.

PHOTO: © 1957 COLUMBIA PICTURES

. . . and that perennial favorite, the reptilian Ymir from *20 Million Miles To Earth.*

Richard O'Brien
and
Shock Treatment

By MIKE CONROY

Editor's Note: In Shakespeare's time, all the world was a stage. But if the Bard were truly immortal he may have offered a revision on that statement along the lines of that offered in Shock Treatment. *Richard O'Brien's follow-up to* The Rocky Horror Picture Show, *in which all the world is one big TV show.*

Denton, U.S.A. is a mythological suburban community that is also a gigantic TV studio. Brad (Cliff de Young) and Janet (Jessica Harper) are a happily married couple who are guests on Marriage Maze, *a game show hosted by the ever-popular Bert Schnick (Barry Humphries). The couple are subsequently carried through a dizzying series of TV game shows, soap operas and dramas that constitute the full spectrum of life in Denton. Meanwhile, the station's godlike-but-evil sponsor, Farley Flavors (also Cliff de Young) plots to break up their marriage in order to have Janet for his own nefarious purposes. Fast food king Flavors arranges for Janet to rise to stardom in Denton's TV world, while Brad is certified insane and committed to Dentonvale, the repository for all of the misfits of Denton's TV society. In the rest home, Brad is placed under the not-so-tender care of Cosmo and Nation McKinley (Richard "Riff-Raff" O'Brien and Patricia 'Magenta" O'Quinn, again playing brother and sister) and Nurse Ansalong (Nell "Columbia" Campbell).*

ALL PHOTOS: © 20TH CENTURY-FOX

***O'Brien and Pat Quinn as loving brother and sister in Rocky Horror* (above) with Tim Curry, and in *Shock Treatment* with Jessica Harper and Barry Humphries.**

Also returning from the Rocky *cast are Charles "the Criminologist" Gray as Judge Oliver Wright, a talk show moderator, and Jeremy Newsom, who repeats his role as Ralph Hapschatt, now the M.C. of The Faith Factory, an inspirational show dedicated to community mental health.*

Shock Treatment *is the brainchild of Richard O'Brien, who wrote the lyrics, co-wrote the screenplay with director Jim Sharman, and co-wrote the music with Richard Hartley. The following interview with the father of the* Rocky *cult was conducted earlier this year, shortly after the completion of principal filming on* Shock Treatment.

FANGORIA: First of all, looking back on it, how do you feel about the *Rocky Horror Picture Show*—it's been what, six years?

RICHARD O'BRIEN: I think everybody thinks about *Rocky Horror Picture* much more than I do. To me you see, I think about the whole event, which I think is quite extraordinary, and *Rocky Horror Picture* happens to be part of a whole phenomenon. I can't really alienate it from the stage show because that show was just as exciting and just as strange in the way it happened as the movie. The movie would not have happened if the show hadn't been successful. No one of course had the slightest idea and no one intended it would be a hit show: it was just meant to be five weeks of fun, that's all it was ever intended to be at any stage of the game. There was no one more surprised than me when (film producer) Michael White said "I think we might transfer this." We put it on in a little room—I think it was 63 people we got in—and I think Michael White gave us about £2,000 (5-6 thousand U.S. dollars).

FANG: I know that when you first created the show, it was a labour of love—what *you* wanted to see—and yet now we have regular weekend showings in America, confetti throwing, the whole works, and I am wondering whether you don't have some regrets that it's grown quite to that stage.

O'BRIEN: No. I have no regrets about that at all. I don't think life should ever become a cross to bear and if you do something and it doesn't work then you should shrug it off and get on with living again. If you're going to be crucified by something that is success-

Television superstar Janet (Jessica Harper) visits hubby Brad (Cliff de Young) in the Dentonvale rubber room. Opposite: O'Brien in a reflective moments with Jessica Harper.

ful, then you are really in bad shape. No, I am delighted really in a way that I can get two minutes of anybody's time now. I can knock on their door and say "Excuse me, I'm so-and-so and I did so-and-so." They may not be interested in what I have to say, but at least they will open the door and give two minutes. That's pretty good isn't it?

I think that anything which becomes as big a social phenomena as *Rocky* can be worrying, but so far there have been no "Rocky murders," no "Rocky" bad news, so I just go along and say this is nice. I have met a lot of the fans in the United States and I must say I like an awful lot of them. I get lots of letters from them regularly; they have become, actually, a bit like pen pals—the only unfortunate thing for them having me for a pen pal is that I don't write very regularly; it's a bit sad for them. There are quite a few I sort of have an "ongoing" writing relationship with.

FANG: Once that starts, it becomes a problem of not being able to draw the line.

O'BRIEN: Well I don't worry about that because I only send postcards anyway, but I am in touch and some of them send me Christmas presents and all sorts of things. It's quite extraordinary, I feel rather touched by it. I can never be blase and sort of think "I've hit the big time" and things. No, I think it's rather wonderful.

FANG: Looking back, is there anything in the film you would have changed?

O'BRIEN: In retrospect I wouldn't change a thing. I would've changed some things after I'd seen the final cut if I'd been able; and probably a year or so afterwards would probably have still changed some things. But the way it's gone, and the way it is, why change it? It works for somebody, doesn't it? It works for a lot of people. In which case, leave it the way it is. I was always a little bit suspect about the Transylvanians and thought it would become a much more menacing, much more frightening movie and a much more closeted sort of movie without them if there had just been those people, just the cast, that family. I wondered whether it needed that, but obviously it did.

FANG: There is a travelling stage version of the play moving around the States now . . .

O'BRIEN: Their biggest problem is dealing with people who have been weaned on the movie and can shout the lines. And, of course, with the film, they get to know the film and how much time there is (even if they're not counting the seconds) between a line and, on a live show, the lines change each night. The actual line doesn't change but the delivery of the line changes, maybe by a fraction of a second, and with the live performance timing is everything!

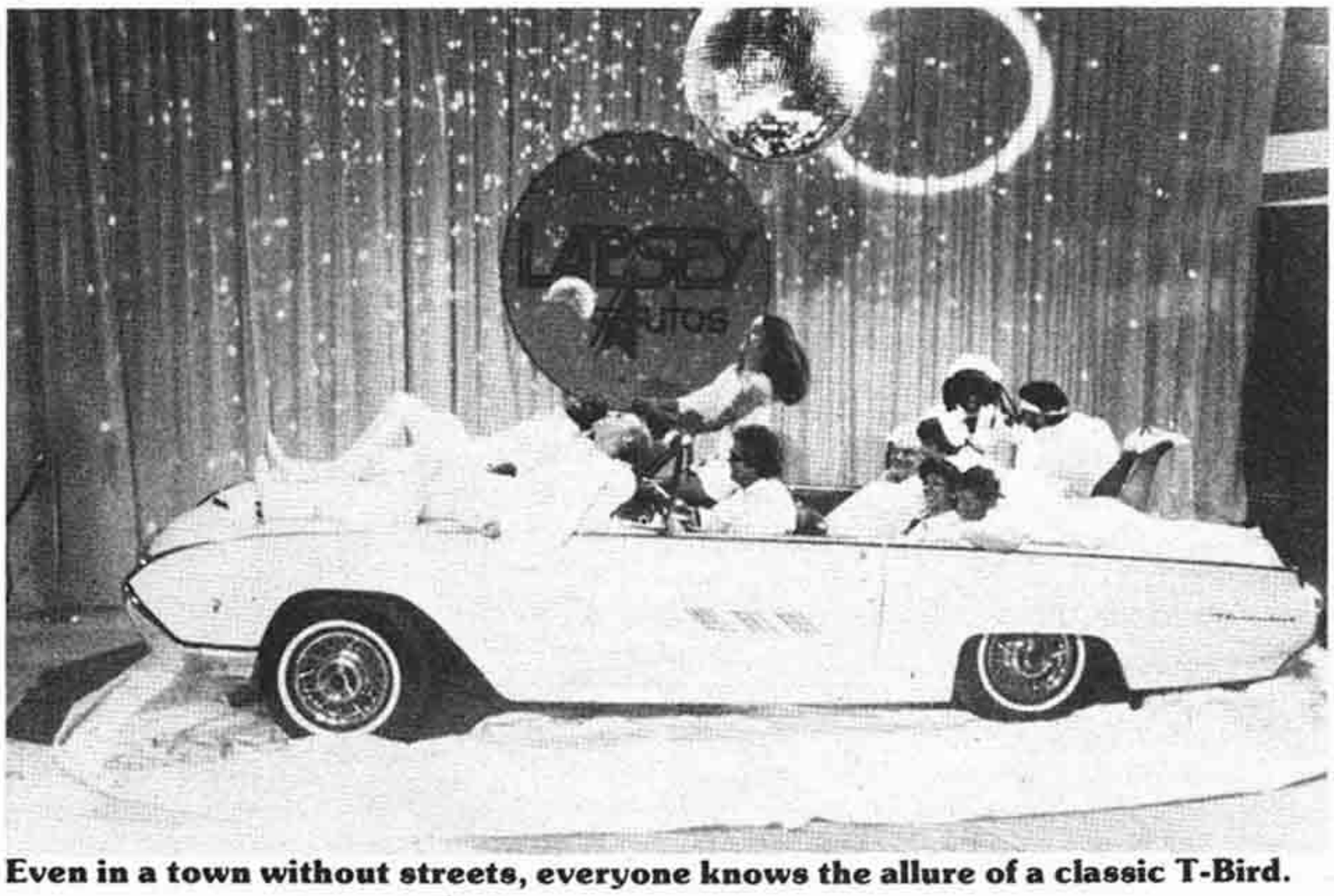
I have seen the show in Boston and I think they're terrific. A terrific cast. You can't beat the Americans for musicals you see. It's their genre. We act very well. We're really good at acting and sharing on stage—"it's your line, I'll play the attention your way. You're the central point at this particular moment. When the action comes my way, you bring the action towards me." We share, we build and we say to the audience "This is the point you are supposed to be looking at. The focal point of the play", and we share it on stage. The Americans know nothing about this. They're not interested in sharing the stage. They're aggressive, rude buggers, and "look out this is *my* line, this is *my* scene. you stand back" and "you think you were good up to now—you wait 'til *I* sing". And it's that arrogance, it's that competitive quality that made the American musical great. Because it's wonderful. it's one thing we can't do. We don't have that need. Now if you aren't good in rehearsals you're fired, and it's a cut-throat business. The competitive spirit has made the American musical.

FANG: Are you bothered or concerned by the number of unauthorized productions?

O'BRIEN: All I can say is that it is of concern to me. Not from the fact of "this is my property and pay me the royalties or you're not doing it." It's just that it's not right somehow. It's intrusion of privacy in a way.

FANG: Would you be willing to give the readers some indication of what to expect—not necessarily the storyline, but some indication of *Shock Treatment.*

O'BRIEN: It's the story of family intrigue; it's certainly a story of the predominant male/female relationship these days with the woman saying "I'm a person as well" and the man saying "We used to go out and hunt and bring back the goodies and your place was in the home. What's my role now? It's all thrown into confusion."



Even in a town without streets, everyone knows the allure of a classic T-Bird.

"You need a little (whoa)—shock treatment," sings the cast . . .

. . . and the audience of Denton residence yelp their agreement.

and "OK I'm a sexist pig I suppose but where am I now as a sexist pig? How do I cope with life? How do I cope with you?" That problem which is a very important one in society at the moment is thrown into relief and certainly the problem of others coming into your life during your problems and saying "I know the answer. What you've got to do is get rid of that asshole. He/She is hanging you up". And you suddenly listen to other people rather than listen to yourself; rather than come to your own decision, other people start to tell you what to do. It's the story of that as well.

FANG: We have how many songs?

O'BRIEN: I think 15, I'm not quite sure.

FANG: Do you see any sort of parallel between *Shock Treatment* and *Rocky Horror?*

O'BRIEN: No, not really because *Rocky* was very much the Mary Shelley/Bram Stoker tale taken into the 1970s; very much that sort of thing with all those lovely 50s 'B' movies playing and dialogue. And this has, hopefully, got a little bit of the dialogue—because that's my sort of dialogue anyway and I like to write in that style—and hopefully people will say "That's an O'Brien line" even though it belonged to somebody else originally. "O'Brien spotted it and said 'that's worth keeping, let's hear it again and play it with irony'." But other than that, no.

FANG: So you could literally walk in off the street to see it.

O'BRIEN: You *have* to have no reference whatsoever.

FANG: Which is perhaps a much better way of doing a sequel anyway.

O'BRIEN: Yes. If you do have the reference then you will spot little things that crop up, little echos. If you know about *Rocky* then you'll see things that echo *Rocky* but if you don't know *Rocky* then it doesn't matter anyway. We have thrown little bits in for *Rocky* fans, certainly.

FANG: But don't go expecting to see *Rocky Horror II.*

O'BRIEN: Go expecting to have a nice time again. Tap your feet, sing a few songs and laugh a little at the jokes.

FANG: Do you have any doubts in your own mind about the reaction from the *Rocky Horror* fans?

O'BRIEN: I think there are always a few purists, and there are bound to be a few purists who are disappointed that it's not a sequel in the true sense of the word. I am sure that's bound to happen but you can't live your life trying to come up to other people's expectations—if you try to do that you are limiting yourself from a whole area of life really; a dog chasing its own tail. That would be a bit silly.

FANG: Cliff de Young—how did you arrive at casting him as Brad and as his brother Farley?

O'BRIEN: I don't know if you remember a magazine called *OZ.* It was an English magazine run by Australians—hence the *OZ.*

(Continued on Page 65)

MONSTER INVASION

Up-to-the-minute warnings of what's coming your way!

MOVIES

SNAKES: When the *New York Times* predicted that the next cycle of horror films will feature snakes, replacing the durable werewolf, we wondered what would lead them to that conclusion since there *always* seems to be a snake film coming around. In the past we've been treated to such gems as *Slither, Sssssss, The Snake People* (originally titled *Isle of the Snake People*), and *The Reptile* to name just a few.

Well, there are two films coming in the next several months that gave that prestigious paper the notion of a new wave. The first is a United Artists film, *King Cobra*, starring Fritz Weaver as a priest. It seems a cobra in a small southern town becomes possessed by the devil and the Priest must do battle to save hundreds of lives.

Bill Wilson produced the film independently, for his own W.P.W. Productions, and brought it in on schedule and under $2 million. Gerry Holland wrote the script based on Wilson's idea and Bob Claver, a veteran television director makes his feature debut on the film.

Wilson got the idea for the film from a real lift event in 1955. A carnival train derailed in Springfield, Mo., releasing many snakes who killed quite a number of town inhabitants.

Weaver's Priest is convinced that the devil has possessed but his theories are challenged by local scientists played by Gretchen Corbett and Jon Korkes.

Originally, there were plans to make mechanical snakes until snakehandler Bill Haast convinced Wilson to use trained live snakes. All the fights and close-ups of snakes in action were indeed live snakes. This probably made cinematographer Dean Cundey *(Halloween, The Fog)* more than a little nervous. Cundey was also presented with the challenge of designing and filming light shows representing the supernatural element.

The other film is *Venom*, which Tobe Hooper was originally scheduled to direct. After only a few days of shooting, Hooper was called back from London because of a family illness and Piers Haggard came aboard to direct.

Producer Martin Bregman *(Four Seasons)* and writer Robert Harrington worked with Haggard to bring the film to life. A source at Paramount, the company that has picked up the film for distribution in late January, tells us that the movie is "very stylish and well-acted."

Klaus Kinski *(Nosferatu)* Nicol Williamson *(Excalibur)* Oliver Reed *(Condorman)*, Susan George, Sterling Hayden and Sarah Miles star in this suspense thriller about the son of a United States diplomat living in London. The boy went to the pet shop to pick up a normal, everyday garden snake but was accidentally given a black mamba—perhaps the deadliest snake known to man. After arriving home, the boy is the subject of a failed kidnapping-attempt. Trapped, the kidnappers try and negotiate their freedom with the police who have the house blocked off. Unknown to the boy, the kidnappers or the boy's Grandfather, another hostage, the mamba is loose. Throughout the film the snake appears, kills, disappears, appears, scares everyone and goes all over the house. It's quite late in the story before the kidnappers figure out what has been happening.

The source also mentioned that the film contains "one of the most disgustingly realistic death scenes" he had ever seen in a movie.

PHOTO: © 1981 UNITED ARTISTS

Yowch! This fellow shows the unpleasant results of a tangle with *King Cobra*.

THE THING: Kurt Russell has been cast as McReady, the lead character in John Carpenter's remake of *The Thing*. Filling out the balance of the antarctic military installation personnel will be Richard Dysart, Donald Moffat, David Clennon, T.K. Carter A. Wilford Brimley, Keith David, Charles Hallahan, Peter Maloney, Richard Masur, Joel Polis, Thomas Waites and Norbert Weisser, fulfilling Carpenter's prediction last issue that he would stay away from "big names," through the cast does include some familiar character actors. Albert Whitlock, veteran matte artist, has joined the special effects crew, and, as you read this, location work has been completed in Juneau, Alaska and Stewart, British Columbia. Principal photography in Universal's L.A. studios is expected to wrap in early November, and current plans call for a summer, '82 release.

THE BEASTMASTER: In a matter of weeks, Don Coscarelli, director of *Phantasm*, expects to begin shooting his long-awaited barbarian epic on location in Mexico. As we informed you some time ago, the script, co-written with *Phantasm* producer Paul Pepperman, concerns a young warrier hero who is in telepathic communion with the beasts of his age.

After two years of nursing the project, Coscarelli looks forward to the start of filming with elation and a certain amount of nervousness. The film's budget, around $7 million, is several times that of *Phantasm*, it is his first film calling for work with animals and with a good deal of prosthetic makeup (on animals and actors), and it means living in Mexico for five full months. At the time we spoke to him, he was particularly concerned with the casting of the lead role. "We need him to be about six feet tall," says Coscarelli, "with a muscular build, and it's especially important that he can act, which not many of the muscle-builders we've seen are able to do. And final casting approval is held by the costar—a big cat who doesn't get along with everybody. If he doesn't like the actor, that's it."

MOONIES: When John Landis was preparing the pop soundtrack for *An American Werewolf in London*, two of his choices for

PHOTO: © 1980 PARAMOUNT

MOVIE POLL RESULTS

FANGORIA readers are a truly mixed breed, as is amply demonstrated by the results of our first movie poll. *Friday the 13th* and *The Shining* were both loved and hated by our readers, so that both films appear on the "10 best" *and* the "10 worst" films lists.

Because of some confusion concerning their release date, *Dawn of the Dead, Halloween* and *Phantasm* appear on both the "all-time favorites" list and "10 best list," although these categories were designed to be mutually exclusive. In fact, *Dawn of the Dead* can be viewed as an "unofficial" winner of the poll, since it garnered more votes in both categories than any other film.

In order to avoid such confusion with our next poll (coming soon!), a nominating ballot will be sent to our subscribers prior to the publication of the official poll ballot, which will provide specific films for voting in each category.

Only two readers accurately predicted the top 3 films in the "recent" division of the poll—Jon Weimer of Greensburg, PA and Jeff Flagg of Olean, NY. Less accurate, but still close enough to win a signed King novel, were Tom Mosberger, East Sparta, OH, Anthony Lopez, Jacksonville, FL, Earl Trout, York, PA and Ron Gerstner, Waterton, WI.

The 10 Best
(June, 1979—May, 1981)
1. *Friday the 13th*
2. *Dawn of the Dead*
3. *Phantasm*
4. *ALIEN*
5. *Scanners*
6. *The Shining*
7. *The Howling*
8. *The Fog*
9. *Halloween*
10. *Zombie*

The 10 Worst
(July, 1979—May, 1981)
1. *The Shining*
2. *Friday the 13th*
3. *Saturn 3*
4. *Prophecy*
5. *Prom Night*
6. *Mother's Day*
7. *Motel Hell*
8. *The Brood*
9. *My Bloody Valentine*
10. *The Awakening*

All-Time Best
(released before June, 1979)
1. *Halloween*
2. *Night of the Living Dead*
3. *The Exorcist*
4. *Carrie*
5. *Dawn of the Dead*
6. *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*
7. *Psycho*
8. *The Omen*
9. *Jaws*
10. *Phantasm*

PHOTO: © 1980 WARNER BROTHERS

Above, Jason steps forward to accept his Fango award. At left, Jack Nicholson consoles his costar, Danny Lloyd, after their tragic defeat. Tough break, guys!

inclusion were Cat Steven's *Moonshadow* and Bob Dylan's warbling rendition of *Blue Moon*. Stevens, who recently "found God" through an Islamic sect, and Dylan, who abandoned Judaism for Christianity a few years back, both found the film's story objectionable on the grounds that evil should not be mocked, and denied permission to use their tunes.

ULTRAMAN—HERO FROM THE STARS: Don Glut, comics writer, cartoon scripter, novelist, Frankenstein expert and filmmaker, has been assigned screenwriting duties on the first major-budget Japanese film designed specifically for American audiences. Suburaya Productions, which has thrived for years by providing effects for the films of other Japanese studios (like Toho's *Godzilla* series) and by producing their own TV programs for the Japanese market, have decided to go international with their first feature film, starring their most popular television character, *Ultraman*. "It will be filmed entirely in the U.S.," says Glut, "except for the post-production effects, which will be done in japan. They have an American director in mind, though that's not really set, an American cast, and they want the character designs to be done by

PHOTO: © SUBURAYA PRODUCTIONS/COURTESY JOHN DONALDSON

Ultraman mounts his trusty steed, ready for his trans-Pacific trek to the good old U.S.A.

an American. They've already spoken to a good friend of mine, Roger Dicken, who designed the chestburster and the facehugger in *ALIEN.*" Design chores will include the depiction of three mutated prehistoric reptiles, and their commander, an intelligent reptilian humanoid.

Despite Suburaya's desire to give *Ultraman* an American polish, Glut assures American fans of Japanese fantasy that his script is very much in tune with the continuity and the feel of the original, despite a few revisions in the character. "The new Ultraman will be played by an American, and they wanted me to humanize him somewhat. I guess the major difference in that his costume, which apparently is part of his skin in the TV series, will definitely be represented as a costume."

BLOODSUCKING FREAKS: News recently came to us from Mr. Sleazoid Express himself, Bill Landis, that this picture, reported as a new production in our last "Monster Invasion," is actually a mid-70's release, *The Incredible Torture Show (TITS* for short), recut to an R. Nevertheless, we must point out that they have a dandy ad campaign.

RIPPED TO SHREDS: Assuming that everything comes together properly, Don Glut will have another exciting task ahead of him after completing the *Ultraman* script—directing *Ripped to Shreds*. "I was a little hesitant at first, it being another man-with-a-knife story, but there are a few things that serve to make this one a little unique," says Glut. Whatever twists serve to make the story special must remain secret for now; however, we can tell you one exciting bit of news about the project—it's to be filmed in 3-D!

CONGO: Not many successful film directors and screenwriters are able to simultaneously maintain a career as a novelist. Michael Crichton, in fact, is the only one we can think of. And yet, his latest bestselling novel, though optioned for filming by 20th Century-Fox, may never hit the big screen.

Congo concerns the search for an ancient artifact concealed in a diamond mine in the ancient lost city of Zinj; an artifact that holds unspeakable power for the nation that possesses it. On the surface, the major themes are rather similiar to those of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*—but that is not the obstacle to the film's production; the story itself is quite different. No, the real problem is a matter of apes. The city of Zinj is the stomping grounds of a tribe of killer apes, and the lead character of the novel is Amy, a gorilla raised in an experimental primate laboratory in the U.S. In the course of the book, Amy "goes undercover" to retrieve the artifact, hopefully not alienating the city's misanthropic anthropoids.

Since no one involved in the film project is anxious to work with 20 or 30 real apes, the only conceivable solution is special effects makeup—lots of it. However, hiring someone as skilled as, say, Rick Baker, to do 20 or 30 ape suits of truly believable quality can be mighty damned expensive. A good source tells us that another solution is currently being explored—using chimpanzees as stand-ins for the ape characters! Full-grown chimps, we are told, rival most apes in height, they simply lack the bulk required, which can be remedied throught the application of lots of bulky fur. Still to be answered is whether 20 or 30 monkeys wearing fur coats under hot studio lights will be manageable—someone may end up wishing they had used real killer apes!

DOUBLE YOUR FUN WITH FANGORIA'S DOUBLE—BILL CONTEST!

We must be gluttons for punishment here, 'cause this time we're going to be administering two spectacular Fango contests instead of our usual one! (By the way, those of you who think we didn't have a contest last issue should check out the fine print at the bottom of the contents page, issue #14. Then again, maybe you shouldn't, as the prizes are already gone!)

The *Halloween II* Contest

50 winners of the *Halloween II* Contest will receive novelizations of the film, courtesy of those fine folks at Zebra Books. Just answer the following questions (should be easy, one you've seen the picture), and send your entry to us. We're sure that more than 50 of you will answer correctly, so winners will be determined by drawing. Some of the answers are mentioned only once in the dialog of the film, so listen carefully!

1. What movie is seen on the TV set in the Elrod house?
2. What business is Laurie's father engaged in?
3. Which nurse is named after a key crew member on *Escape From New York?*
4. What popular song is heard over the radio?
5. Who is Sam Hain?
6. Name three instruments of death used by the Shape in *Halloween II.*
7. What bit of business can be construed as a tribute to Elvis?
8. What is the name of the institution that the Shape escaped from?
9. Who is Bennett Tramer?
10. What is the last line in the movie?

Since *Halloween II* is still being edited as we write, we cannot guarantee that all the answers to the above questions will appear in the film as released. Questions that cannot be answered will be eliminated from consideration. And, by the way, there is one question that's kinda tricky.

The *Shock Treatment* Contest

Courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox, we are giving away 50 *Shock Treatment* T-Shirts! In order to ensure that these shirts to to the most deserving Fangorians, we are asking you to complete the following phrase in 30 words or less—"I want a *Shock Treatment* T-Shirt because..." indicate your shirt size, S,M,L or XL.

A three-creature panel (Bob Martin, Robert Greenberger and the Thing in Dungeon #5) will consider all entries based upon brilliance of wit, declarations of need (don't be afraid to beg, if you're into it), and apparent sincerity (real sincerity is not required).

Send all entries to:

FANGORIA's Double Bill
475 Park Avenue South, 8th Fl. Ste.
New York, NY 10016

You are welcome to enter both contests—but only once. All entries become the property of O'Quinn Studios, Inc. The deadline for both contests is November 20, 1981.

AVCO EMBASSY: This studio's new president, Frank Capra, Jr., told us of a number of projects lined up for 1982 release when we spoke briefly on the *Swamp Thing* set. Here's a quick rundown on those of interest to Fangorians:

Vice Squad: Gary Sherman, the director of *Dead & Buried,* is currently at work on this gritty crime drama set in one of the nastier sections of Los Angeles. "There are three cen-

tral characters," says Capra, "a sympathetic cop, a hooker, who is partly sympathetic, partly not, and a real vicious killer." The film is being shot by the great John (*The Shining, Terror Train*) Alcott, and we may expect one of the most spectacular car chases ever filmed. An R rating is expected.

The Seduction: A moderately low-budget thriller with Morgan Fairchild (of *Flamingo Road*) as a beautiful young woman (easy for her to play) who is being harassed by a disturbed individual who turns out to be a demented killer. The twist here is that the intended victim turns the tables on the killer by picking up on his methods of harassment.

The Whiz Kid: A comedy intended to fill the gap between the bland boredom of Disney and the R-rated antics of *Animal House*. Scott Baio (*Happy Days*) plays a high school student endowed with unique mental capabilities who is recruited by his friends in a series of money-making shcemes. Planned for a PG rating.

Intimate Moments: Principal filming was recently completed in Paris for this espionage tale concerning the famous Madame Claude, whose ladies of the night undermined the French Vichy government by passing secret information on to the American and British high command during World War II.

Paradise: Teenage love in the 1870's in Baghdad. Differs from pictures in the *Blue Lagoon* mold by the presence of an action-adventure element, according to Capra.

The King of Central Park: Script now in development concerning a young ghetto visionary and the group he forms to combat New York crime. Capra sees the project as combining character study, serious consideration of the pros and cons of such vigilante groups, and plenty of tough aciton.

Humongous: Bill Gray, who wrote *The Changeling, An Eye For An Eye* and *Prom Night* came up with this title that everyone seemed to love about a year ago, and has been developing the script to go with it ever since. Apparently, Gray has made progress since we spoke with Capra, since it's now shooting in Canada.

The Philadelphia Experiment: Carpenter's "top secret" project, which he dropped in favor of *Escape From New York*, is described by Capra as still very much alive for Avco. "What we're waiting for now is the right script," we were told.

3-D REVIVAL: It's here–though not exactly the way we'd wanted it. *Comin' At Ya* is a certified hit; in fact, in the early weeks of release they were selling tickets faster than they could supply 3-D glasses. However, without bothering to criticize the film's story here, we must say that the quality of the 3-D image in this film is abysmal. Part of the problem is certainly in the theaters; constant adjustment of the projector is necessary for proper alignment of the stereo images throughout this film, and not many projectionists see that as a part of their job. According to 3-D technicians we spoke with, the Ultimax III system used in *Comin' At Ya* is fairly primitive in comparison with other single-camera 3-D systems available today. Finally, judging by the improved quality of the film's final reel, it is probably safe to assume that producer Tony Anthony's crew learned much about the use

PHOTO: © 1981 FILMWAYS

Comin' at Ya: Anthony brings back 3-D, but the best is yet to be!

of the system while making the film. On the plus side, the Dolby stereo sound is excellent throughout. Anthony and executive producer Gene Quintano, who also starred in the film, are both strong believers in the potential of 3-D, and certainly their intentions were to bring in the best 3-D film they could under a given budget. We look forward to a sharp improvement in their next 3-D feature, *Seein' Is Believin'*.

The success of *Comin' At Ya* will certainly inspire a slew of 3-D films to follow, and they will be of two kinds—those quickly and sloppily made by producers anxious to cash in on something they see as a short-lived fad, and those made with care by people who see 3-D as a real part of the technical evolution of film—just like sound, color and wide-screen—leading to a truer imitation of life.

Among the 3-D projects we have caught wind of, an especially intriguing title is *Louisiana Swamp Murders*, now in development at King-Hitzig productions, makers of *Wolfen*. Coincidentally, *Wolfen's* director, Michael Wadleigh is also engaged in the development of a 3-D project which remains secret for now, though it can be described as a strange odyssey through space and time. *Variety* recently reported preparation of a 3-D adaptation of Roger Zelazny's *Roadmarks*, a collection of short stories connected by a narrative device into the form of a novel, which is budgeted at $15,000,000 and, in the SF epic tradition, is amed at a May, 1983 release date, though no major studio involvement was mentioned. John Landis has confirmed remake plans for *The Creature from The Black Lagoon*, with Jack Arnold directing. Though Landis didn't mention 3-D plans to us, it would seem a bit short-sighted to remake the 3-D classic without the added dimension, now that 3-D has proven its profit potential. Earl Owensby, currently producing and starring in the 3-D terror film *Rottweiler*, recently announced a second-3D project, a car-crash epic called 2+2=5.

Also possible for distribution are some 3-D films made in Asia that were never widely distributed here in the states, though it's to be expected that these are probably lower in technical quality than some of the current technology allows. And, certainly, there must be at least one idea for a 3-D epic being batted about behind closed doors at each of the major studios.

Now that the 3-D revival is here, we have to wonder how long it will stay. Improperly used, 3-D *can* cause eyestrain and headaches, and a rapid influx of movies designed for quick exploitation of the 3-D "gimmick" will effectively kill off the market for the better-quality films to follow. And, most ironic of all, if this doeshappen, it's certain that the very same producers who kill the trend will blame its death on a "fickle" public.

INTERFACE: This science fiction epic has been under development at Francis Ford Coppolla's Zoetrope Studios for quite a while. It concerns a man who is linked up with a computer who recognizes the link as a source of great and horrible power. Assigned as director is Scott Bartlett, primarily known in the San Francisco area as an underground filmmaker. Bartlett has also made a reputation for himself as a "trips specialist;" he served as adviser on a number of psychedelic epics, from Roger Corman's *The Trip* to Ken Russell's *Altered States*.

Since many of the film's scenes take place within the computer-mind of the lead character, plans call for quite a few state-of-the-art effects techniques. Computer-generated images and computer animation will be used, as will newly-developed high-resolution videotape, said to yield a more detailed image than 35mm film (though some of that detail may be lost in the duplication of prints, the sharper source-image should make a visible difference).

Needless to say, all this high-tech artistry costs money, which is the one thing Zoetrope didn't have at the beginning of this year. Despite the success of *The Black Stallion* and *Apocalypse Now*, Coppolla found himself without the investment funds to complete his own directorial project, *One From The Heart*, or to salvage anything from Zoetrope's disastrous attempt to make an art film out of *Hammett*, Joe Gores' suspense novel, filmed under the direction of Wim Wenders. And then Paramount stepped in.

Subsequently, newspapers picked up on the story of Paramount's "bail-out" of *One From the Heart*, but most of the story was not revealed. Part of the bail-out deal included a healthy share of *Interface*, which only recently moved its production office from Zoetrope to Paramount, and a deal with *Interface* producer Jon Daison to produce a $7 million action-shocker, *White Dog*.

Zoetrope now seems to be on firmer ground, at least since agreements were made to get on the sequel bandwagon with *The Black Stallion Returns*. However, while Coppolla's continued practice of "life on the edge" seems to make work exciting for him, his coworkers are not necessarily as happy. Shortly after Zoetrope missed one too many payrolls, Zoetrope's top production executive, Lucy Fisher, took an extended European vacation. On her return, she accepted a position as a v.p. at Warner.

WHITE DOG: Paramount bought the rights to Romaine Gary's story several years ago, and had a great deal of trouble finding creative people for this project. Gary's story concerned an escaped dog, trained to attack blacks, and a black trainer who attempts to reverse the dog's habits, resulting in a separate-but-equal rain of fury on both halves of the human race. Word started circulating in Hollywood that the story was "racist;" Paramount started having trouble in getting established talent to even consider the script.

Then came the financial problems at Francis Ford Coppolla's Zoetrope Studios. As it happens, producer Jon Davison was under contract to Paramount and out on special loan to Zoetrope for *Interface*. Since *Interface* could not continue without Paramont's aid, part of the deal made was the recall of Davi-

son's contract. His first assignment: White Dog.

Davison was particularly valued by Paramount. At New World Pictures, Davison and Joe Dante seemingly made movies out of thin air. And, under Davison, *Airplane!* was made under budget, under schedule, and became one of Paramount's biggest hits ever. If anyone could pull off *White Dog*, it was Davison. And, since Paramount's bail-out of Zoetrope was linked to Davison's agreement to do *White Dog*, it really didn't matter whether he wanted to or not.

But as they say, it's the singer, not the song. *White Dog* may measure up as a nifty little action picture. The great Sam Fuller was tapped as director, and the script has been rewritten to soften the racial element (the trainer now attempts to cure the dog). Fuller seemed very pleased with the picture when he spoke to the press shortly before filming was completed in mid-June. "All that other stuff, aliens, monsters and creatures, is make-believe." said Fuller. "It's never happened in the history of the world. This is the facts of life in the U.S. today and for the last 100 years."

THE GRIM REAPER: Tisa Farrow, Mia's sister and one of the stars of *Zombie*, returns to the screen in another imported Italian shocker due for release any time now—*The Grim Reaper*. Farrow plays Julie, a young college student, who hitches a ride with a group

PHOTO: © 1981 FILM VENTURES INTERNATIONAL

The pizza-faced *Reaper*.

of yachting tourists to visit an old friend who has taken up residence on a small Greek island. Once they arrive, their yacht is cast adrift, and they find themselves trapped on the island with a semi-human monster whose hobbies include decapitation, cannibalism and plain old-fashioned murder.

STAB: More details on the Jacqueline-the-Ripper saga we told you about a few issues back: Robert Benton and David Newman, the writing team behind *Bonnie and Clyde*, were approached some years ago to prepare a script for a proposed remake of Hitchcock's *The Lodger*. Deciding that it had already been done to perfection by the master, the team refused—and yet the suggestion had implanted a seed. After a few story conferences, Newman and Benton came up with a fresh variation on the *Lodger*/Jack-the-Ripper theme by changing the sex of the killer, and by centering the tale upon a man who falls deeply in love with the woman that he suspects is the killer.

Though United Artists was anxious to see the project through from the start, it was shelved for a time when the two writers went on to other commitments, including work on the *Superman* screenplay and, for Benton, writing and directing chores on *Kramer vs. Kramer*. Following the huge success of that film, Benton returned to *Stab*, while Newman stayed with the *Superman* saga, and began scripting chores on Columbia's *Sheena, Queen of the Jungle*.

Benton's final script for *Stab* concerns Brooke Reynolds (Meryl Streep), a shy, beautiful woman who is mistress to an antiques expert for a prestige auction gallery. When her lover is stabbed to death, Reynolds is under suspicion for murder—but that does not deter psychiatrist Dr. Sam Rice (Roy Scheider) from falling in love with her.

According to the folks at United Artists, fans of classic suspense will find the film doubly rewarding, as Benton pays subtle homage to a wide range of film mystery masterworks.

PHOTO: © 1981 UNITED ARTISTS

Scheider and Streep in *Stab*.

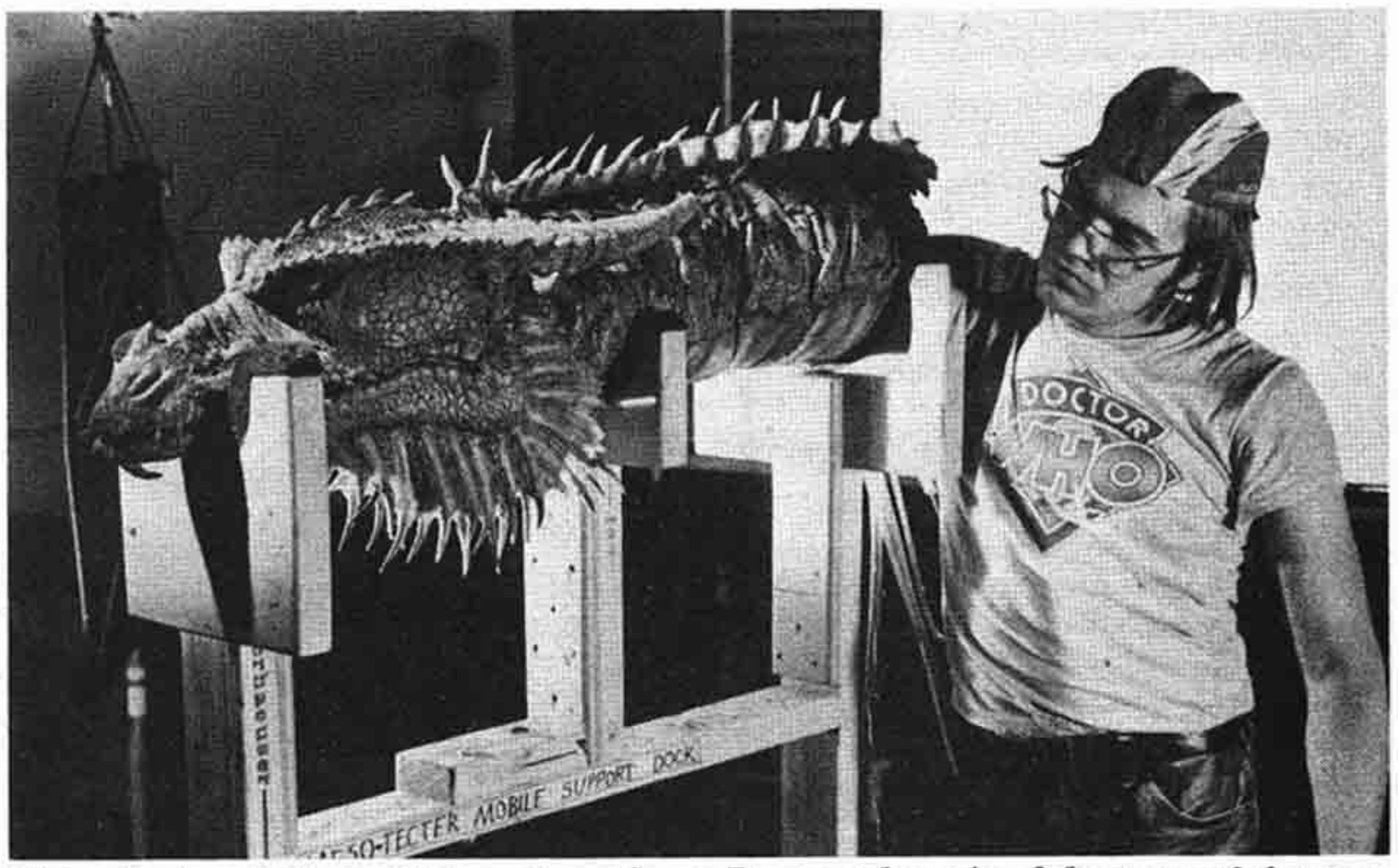


PHOTO: © 1981 PARAMOUNT

This photo of Chris Walas at work on *Dragonslayer*'s elaborate miniature dragon's head came in 'way too late for our coverage of his work last issue, but here it is. Chris is currently at work on the 3-D terror film *Fright Night*, and on a major, top secret project—details to come!

PHOTO: © 1981 AMERICAN CINEMA

"Boy, that Mickey Spillane, he sure can write," said the late Paddy Chayevsky. Spillane's classic *I, The Jury* has been filmed in a new version (the first one, made in 1953, was in 3-D; this one's flat). In this scene, the psychotic Kendricks (Judson Scott) torments the sultry Velda (Laurene Landon). Though it's a private eye movie, we just wanted to mention it here because the script is by Larry (*It's Alive*) Cohen, and it boasts effects by Stan Winston and Carl Fullerton.

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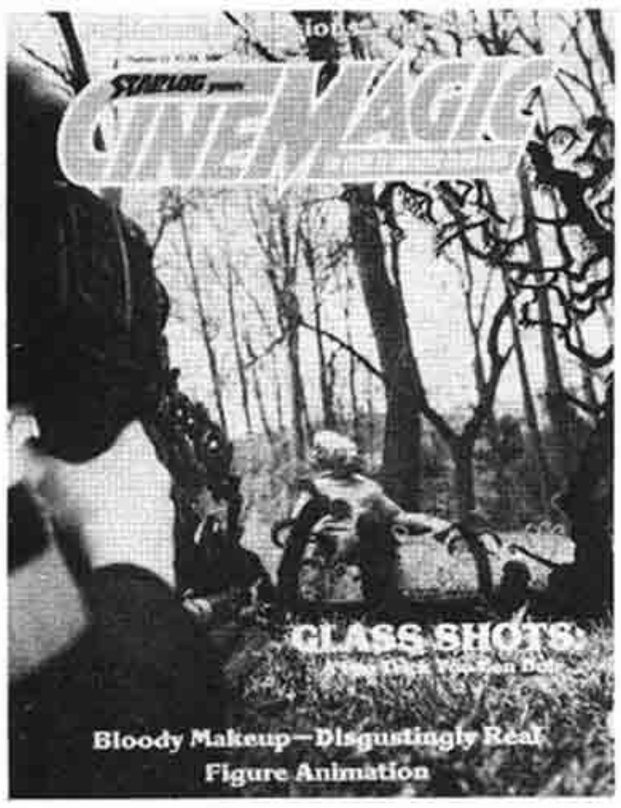

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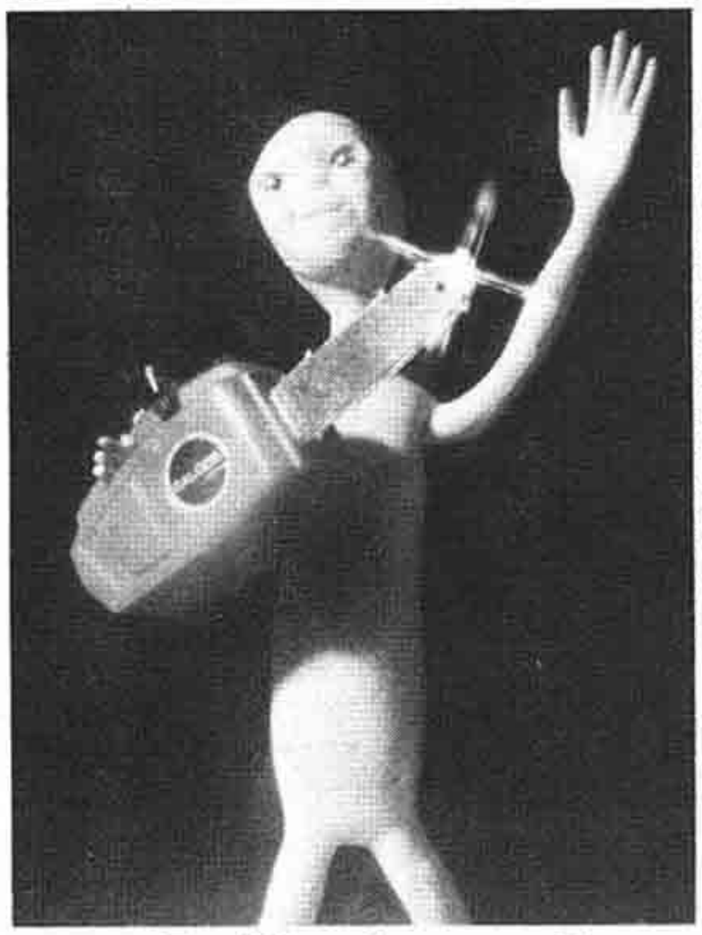
POLTERGEIST: With the blanket of secrecy surrounding this production, FANGORIA, like all the other magazines in this field, has nothing to report but unsubstantiated rumors. However, unlike certain other publications, we're ready to BACK UP those rumors with PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE!

The first thing you should do is FORGET all those rumors you've heard elsewhere about various Spielberg projects like *Night Skies, The E. T. & Me, Close Encounters* sequels, *The Cisco Kid* and, yes, even *Poltergeist*. All of these projects are a clever ruse to distract press attention from the REAL scoop—*Texas Chainsaw Encounter*, a combined sequel to both Hooper's *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

TCE, as the insiders call it, concerns the rollicking misadventures of Doughface, an alien misfit who comes to Earth seeking employment in Pillsbury commercials. After being painfully rejected by Pillsbury, he does find a job replacing Suzane Sommers in the ACE Hardware commercials, and eventually becomes romantically involved with a talking chainsaw named Galoob—which is when the REAL fun begins.



HOAX PHOTO: © JOHN CLAYTON, BOB MARTIN, CHRISTIAN NYBY

Earthlings be warned!

According to our sources, the script was received telepathicallay by fundamentalist minister Herberd W. Strongarm, who claims the source of transmission is the planet Venus in the year 2011. Strongarm further asserts that the script, which combines violent action with old-fashioned Disney-like family entertainment, is actually a stern ecological warning to people who don't bother to keep their biodegradable issues of FANGORIA in mint condition by preserving them in plastic bags or, preferably, blocks of lucite.

No cast or crew credits are currently available, which has given rise to yet another rumor—that Carlo Rambaldi is currently working triple-time to complete construction of crewmembers, director and cast.

Efforts to receive confirmation of the above have produced no results ("C'mon guys, we're busy makin' a *movie*," was the reply to our request)—however, at this time, it's the most reliable report we can bring to you.

JOHN LANDIS' NEXT: We caught the director of *An American Werewolf* just before he began a long vacation in China and found out what's coming next.

"I found the one script out of a hundred that I really liked," he said of Ron Koslow's *In to the Night*. Koslow, who wrote *Lifeguard* several years ago, penned a "contemporary thriller. It's a drama set in Los Angeles about a man who can't sleep."

In 1982, after he finishes this film for Universal, Landis will direct an independantly produced version of *Dick Tracy*. Landis said he wrote the script several years ago and got interested in the character at the time and will get interested once again when the right time

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MISCELLANEOUS

AMATEUR PHOTOGS/ARTISTS: Will pay for Savini-style photos/drawings to illustrate horror fanzine. Write for specs to J. Cathcart, 74007 Playa Vista, 29 Palms, CA 92277.

WANTED: VIOLENT WORLD Magazine Issues #3-5; Would like to correspond with War Movie Buffs, Amateur Film Critics, Sam Peckinpah & Bonnie Franklin Fans. Robert Hale, 99 Glenview Ave., Greensburg, PA. 15601.

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WANTED: Any real gory photos! Ron Runyon, 6840 E 76 Pl, Commerce City, Colorado 80022.

WANTED: Clockwork Orange VHS video tape R or X rated. Will pay well. Mike Nandsg, 5379 E Willow St., Long Beach, CA 90815.

WANTED: Movie posters and pen pals around 15 years old. A.J. Charest, 13990 W 82nd Ave. Golden, CO 80401.

MORE GORE. Comic and horror fans write: B. Siefken, R2, Box 281 O'Fallon, MO 63366.

WANTED: Any pics or articles on all films by Romero, DePalma and Cronenberg. Anything greatly appreciated. Jim Capobianco, 13 MacArthur Ave, Lodi, NJ 07644.

WANTED: Pen pal who is a fan of Dracula (Frank Langella) *and* Werewolves around age 16—Sheri, PO Box 6, Mabton, WA 98935.

Michael Zampitella, 8 Pontiac Rd., Peabody, MA 01960.

14-Loves horror. Eugene Colon, 150 Colton St. 1-D, Staten Island, NY 10305.

WANTED: "Return of the Living Dead" by John Russo, will gladly purchase, To Mario Duran, 638 Highland, Topeka, KS 66607.

WANTED: Co-author to develop sic fi/horror novel & filmscript. Send background info to J. Eubank, 61 Horatio St., #2G, New York, NY 10014.

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TO: Fangoria. Thank you for a wonderful magazine. It's just what I was looking for. Jermaine Wolter.

Love Horror, fantasy, SFX, and rock music? Write to Kathy Grace, 7239 Pinedale Ct, San Jose, CA 95139.

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Many filmmakers abuse animals during production. Speak out! Sadowsky c/o Animal Rights Coalition, Inc., Box 642, Willernie, MN 55090.

WANTED: pen pal, male & sexy females round my age (18). My interest, blood, gore, horror, fantasy & art. James McCarty, 709 Boylston St., Chatt. TN 37405.

WANTED: "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" picture's, articles, posters—Anthony Lopez, 1743 Hawaii Dr. E., Jacksonville, FL 32216.

I collect scenes of graphic violence on video. Am I alone? Richard Hanna, 942 Old Princeton Rd., New Castle, PA 16101.

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Capra Jr.

(Continued from Page 10)

dom. That's the greatest advantage we have over the other studios. As I said, we don't have a great deal of money, and John Carpenter can work anywhere he wants, but after he finishes *The Thing* for Universal, there's a likelihood that he'll be making his next film for us. (According to Debra Hill, possibly an *Escape* sequel, possibly King's *Firestarter*.) At the majors, filmmakers find it very difficult—there's many layers, tiers of executives, they don't know who to talk to, and whoever they talk to doesn't seem to have the authority. I have hopes of doing with Avco more-or-less what was done at United Artists prior to the exodus of much of their creative talent to Orion; develop relationships with the directors, and treat them as creators, rather than as hired hands."

In other words, while there may be fewer *Prom Nights* and *Final Exams* in Avco's future, there will be room for people like Dante, Carpenter and Craven to make the films they want to make. Capra apparently knows the difference between creative freedom and the philosophy of studio-as-playground. His words of support for the under-40 filmmaker in the aftermath of *Heaven's Gate* bodes well for the future of Avco Embassy Pictures.

comes. The film will be a period piece, "no wrist-radios and moon maidens in this one!"

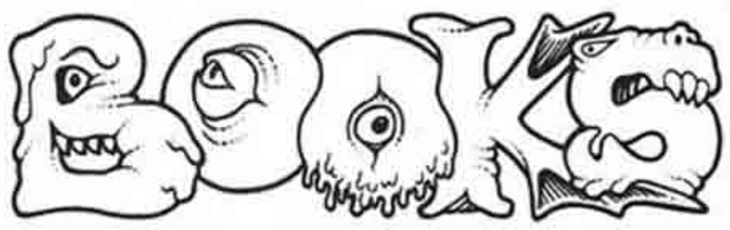
Landis has finally settled with Universal and has a development deal with them to remake *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*. A while back, Landis wanted to remake the film along with *Revenge of the Creature* as one movie. After some disagreements with Universal, the deal fell through. Landis now said the current interest in movies such as *An American Werewolf* has prompted Universal to reactivate the project.

"All I'm going to be doing," he said, "is to be the executive producer." Jack Arnold, who directed the original *Creature* film will direct the remake, quite an unusual move.

The rumors continue to come from Hollywood about making the film in 3-D but all Landis would say is, "It's in development. We're looking for someone to write the script."

SPECIAL THANKS: To Universal Pictures, to John Landis, and especially to Mick Garris, who served as a special public relations consultant on *An American Werewolf In London*, for so kindly making arrangements for over 1,000 subscribers to FANGORIA and STARLOG in the cities of Seattle, Atlanta and New York to be invited to a special invitational preview of *An American Werewolf in London*. We always try to give a little something extra to our subscribers and, with the help of our friends on the West Coast, we certainly succeeded for the readers whose names were selected at random from our subscriber lists.

It was especially nice to get a chance to chat with some of you in person at the New York screening; we certainly hope that we can do it again sometime soon!



CUJO
By Stephen King
Viking Press, $13.95

Reviewed by Bob Martin

The idea of a teenage or young adult woman in danger has never, for me, held the potential for offensiveness that I find in the depiction of violence against children. When sufficiently gratuitous, it strikes me as the cheapest horror trick in the book. In movies, I found the "burning" scene in *Audrey Rose* unspeakably vile; in books, there are the novels of John Saul, which announce their wholly sadistic content with titles like *Suffer The Children*, and regularly sell into the millions, though they are totally lacking in plot and character.

Of course, what offends *me* won't necessarily offend *you;* and, while I found no pleasure in the above examples, I don't consider violence against children "forbidden." There are instances where such subject matter is justified by a story: the death of the little girl in Carpenter's *Assault on Precinct 13;* the child who dies to become a zombie in *Night of the Living Dead;* and, the classic example (as well as the inspiration for many inferior efforts), the extreme torment visited upon little Regan in *The Exorcist*. If we ask how these two classes differ, we can see the bottom line—

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that the latter examples are not *about* the pain of a child. Rather, they concern the lives of children who are the victims of some greater, indiscriminate evil.

In the books of Stephen King, children occupy a particularly dangerous world; every one of his adult characters find the roots of their fear in childhood, aching like a bad tooth, and King's children are themselves haunted by *the bad thing, the bad place,* and monsters real and imaginary. But the evil that threatens King's children never dwells on the physical torment of a child for its own sake.

The first few pages of *Cujo* flirt dangerously with the outer limits of acceptability in these terms. Before the story even begins to form, the reader is presented with a series of sharp images of children threatened by violence: a cannibal monster lurking in a closet; a parent obsessed by the potential ferocity of a playful dog; and—the real capper—a four-year-old girl heaving huge gobbets of blood right after breakfast. And, we find, we're still only on page 16!

After this point, I had my doubts about whether King—or anyone—could write a story offering an after-the-fact justification, especially of that last passage. But those early scenes do, indeed, have a purpose, one that the John Sauls of the world would do well to note. Those scenes are written with a ruthless hand, but King's ruthlessness is soon turned to a higher purpose. *Cujo* is definitely the best work of suspense King has written to date, and that suspense works because the reader *knows* that he is in the hands of a ruthless storyteller.

For once, the supernatural has very little to do with King's plot. Tad Trenton, the four-year-old child who is one of the books central figures, seems to have a touch of "the shining," and Frank Dodd, the child molester from *The Dead Zone,* makes a few ghostly cameo appearances. But Cujo, the rabid Saint Bernard that is the title character, has no obvious supernatural capabilities, and the prescient dreams that haunt several of the characters here have little effect on fate—and it is fate itself that is the inexorable monster dominating this book.

To recount the main substance of the plot here would diminish much of the suspense in the early chapters, where King creates the machine of destruction and sets it in motion. Enough to say that I found it the best if King's many fine novels.

VIRGIN
by James Patterson
Bantam Books, $2.95

Reviewed by Stanley Wiater

We all know that one of the reasons we read horror novels and stories is because we think that one day we might try writing one or the other ourselves.

When it's a good novel, we'll try and see what we liked about it, what makes it work, what *scared* us.

Then again, there are novels such as James Patterson's *Virgin,* which is a textbook case of writing an entire novel with a plot that could be better said in a 32 page short story instead of a 232 page book.

As should be obvious by now, Patterson's idea of writing dramatic scenes is to make almost every one of his paragraphs merely one sentence long.

But more ridiculous still, he resorts to italics whenever anything dramatic happens at all, from describing a character's thoughts, to when someone says something such as "Oh, My God, look out" to a one line description of a supposedly terrifying apparition.

For anyone not familiar with a good tale of horror, their initial impression is that Patterson's novel is a highly stylish page-turner. But the truth is that the unsuspecting reader will be turning the pages quickly only because he's wondering just when something is going to happen. *Virgin* is far from being a splatter novel, but when 150 pages have already gone by before a single important character dies, you have to keep hoping that at least this is all building to an unforgettably horrifying conclusion.

It doesn't. Patterson's concept isn't too bad: in the near future, two adolescent girls find themselves inexplicably pregnant. Inexplicably because they're both still virgins. Enter the specially assigned priests from the Vatican in Rome to see if these virgin pregnancies will carry out a prophesy foretold by the miracle of Our Lady of Fatima nearly a century ago: the prophesy that one girl will give birth to the new Messiah, the second coming of Christ. While the other girl will at the same time give birth to the Anti-Christ. Satan. And depending on which child survives, the rebirth—or the end—of the world will be at hand.

Unfortunately, this entire idea could be smoothly handled in a finely crafted short story, beginning with the night of the two births and concluding with which baby would survive to save or destroy the world. But Patterson spends the entire novel by shuffling his meager cast of characters—an elderly priest, a nun and a young priest who fall in love and eventually become lovers (this is really the only "shocking" scene in that it's the only one not completely predictable), and the two virgin girls. They are all shallow creations, as Patterson's main concern is keeping the reader going on to another chapter before anyone realizes his characters are no more plausible than his plot-line.

Perhaps the kindest words which can be said about *Virgin* is that it's a case of someone writing a horror novel because that's supposedly what the public is clamoring for (This is Patterson's fifth novel; he has worked successfully in the suspense and mystery field in the past.) and what's wrong with trying to please the public? So if *Virgin* is a total failure as there isn't a single *sentence* that is frightening, let alone a scene or a chapter, some readers may still find it of interest.

First, they can read it to know how a writer can "fake it" for 200 pages, as well as how to construct a plot which is so cleverly constructed that you'll read the entire book before discovering you've been cheated. Secondly, they'll see how a very good book idea can be sold as a completed novel once you have a track record behind you. Thirdly, they can appreciate the way the book itself is packaged; how just the title—dripping blood red on a plain black cover—will catch the unwary buyer's eye. Fourthly, they will begin to learn how the publishing industry will successfully exploit a trend.

And finally, they will have to excuse any reviewer who can't resist a one word review for *Virgin*—still-born.

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Shock

(Continued from Page 56)

FANG: Actually, that connection I never made. I always assumed "Wizard," "land" etc.

O'BRIEN: Well, it was a sort of pun *(Oztralia?-Ed.)* and they were involved in a court case in England—"The OZ Trials." They did a stage production of the OZ trials in New York and Jim Sharman directed it—this was in about 1972—and Cliff de Young was in it. That's where Jim and Cliff first met. Since then Cliff had gone on to other things; they re-met and luckily we got him for *Shock Treatment*. He's a wonderful, nice, human being, as is Jessica Harper.

FANG: Was there an effort made to re-unite the entire cast of the *Picture Show?*

O'BRIEN: They were all asked. Susan Sarandon wanted half-a-million dollars. That's a bit much, isn't it really? Especially if you are dealing with $5 million at that stage—she would have taken a chunk of about 10%. Barry Bostwick was otherwise engaged—he had other commitments to make. Tim Curry was asked if he wanted to play Farley/Brad. He said he could play Farley but he couldn't play Brad. He didn't think he could do an American accent well enough to convince people, because one person has to play the two characters. So people *were* asked. It wasn't a question of saying "rubbish you"—I mean we did try to keep it together in a friendly spirit with the best intentions.

FANG: The picture was first announced as *The Brad & Janet Show;* is there any difference between that and *Shock Treatment?*

O'BRIEN: Well, let me tell you the stages that *Shock Treatment* went through. It went through five drafts. I first of all approached Michael White and said "Do you want to do a sequel?" 'Yes.' "Fine, let's do a three-stage deal-treatment, the first draft, and then production of script."

The first script was completed about two years ago. It opened with Rocky Horror scrambling out of the grave of the crater left by the house taking off, dragging the body of Frank across some hills to a house which Dr. Scott had taken to look at the ashes, sort of check out the ashes. Brad had broken up with Janet and went to live with Dr. Scott. While Brad and Scott are talking, Rocky breaks through the window of the house with the body of Frank and asks Scott, in miming gestures, to bring Frank back to life. They all go off to Denton. Janet is having a baby—it's not Brad's and we discover it wasn't Rocky's but it was in fact Frank's, so now we have "son of Frank." There is a big party, the baby's brought in and Janet is wheeled in from the hospital. We discover that the orderlies who have wheeled her in are in fact Riff and Magenta—they steal the baby, go off in an ambulance and off into the future. That was my first draft.

FANG: A true sequel?

O'BRIEN: A true sequel. Jim Sharman said "I have no interest in doing that sort of movie. I have no interest in doing that: write a new story." I said, "I've no interest in writing another story—what I will do is adapt this as a framework. I have done 10 songs already, we are going to have 15 songs—I have written 10 of the songs and I have no interest in throwing all that away; let's use it as a framework, as a basis."

We went through five drafts. A university should study this—how you can adapt one story, it's most extraordinary. Eventually there was no Frank, there was no Rocky. Brad became the focal point; much the same story taking *him* through that. Then Jim and I were about to go up and have a committee meeting sitting round with the producers discussing the script—what did we think, does it say enough?

Jim said we made one mistake. I said "What's that?"—"We should have made Janet the lead character". I said, "Of course we should have done. Let's change the names around on all the dialogue." "You can't do that", said Jim. "Yes you can". But of course you *can't*. It doesn't work that way. It seemed simple at the time in the Kings Road on a sunny afternoon—it seemed fine. Three drafts later we finally got it together.

We finally got *the* draft—it was still going to be realistic—naturalistic, realistic (houses, streets, real life site and location) and then the screen actors' strike. We had been promised $5 million at this stage, and then the SAG [Screen Actors' Guild] strike froze the money.

Jim was very good. He was going back to Australia in about a week's time. He had to go back to do the Adelaide Film Festival; Brian Thomson had gone already to do the Sydney Theatre Company and things in Australia. The whole thing was going down the tubes. How can you save the situation? Jim said it would be nice to try and save two years work and do something with it—it's a good piece, there're some good songs, a good story now, strong. "Do you want to do it on stage?" he asked. "Well" I said, "the West End is pretty sick at the moment; there's not a lot on except revivals and *Oklahoma* and *My Fair Lady* gong gack 20-30 years." "It would be quite exciting and I could film the stage show, take cameras into the theatre," said Jim. I said, "In that case, if we're going to do that, why don't we do it as a stage show but do it under controlled conditions in a controlled environment; do it on a sound stage somewhere and cast the audience just the same as we are casting the play". And the whole thing suddenly started to shift and out of that we cut the budget by at least a quarter, we improved artistically tenfold I think. That was a hard thing to sell to the producers because they thought, "They're just trying to save it". I had to ring up the producers and say "Listen, as far as I'm concerned, if the strike breaks tomorrow and you say 'go with the movie'—I hope it doesn't break tomorrow because this is much, much better than to go out and do it as a realistic thing, round streets and things."

So out of frustration and trouble came something rather wonderful, as always happens I think, and the less money you have the better off you are.

FANG: My knowledge of the cinema isn't that broad. But we actually have in a way a stage play, no?

O'BRIEN: No. It's much, much different, not a stage play at all. That was the first, that was the spawning of it—how do we do this as a stage play? Next stage—do it as a *controlled environment* stage play with cast and audience which is cast and then it's all TV oriented; society encapsulated within a TV studio. There is no other world; just ether, space, outside that studio, and that's life. It's quite extraordinary.

FANG: I get the impression that *Shock Treatment* is perhaps more serious and

Things
to come

As we approach the end of the best year in memory for horror films, rumor has it that the very best is yet to be! *Ghost Story* is coming your way in December and, if the advance word is reliable, it's going to be the most exciting film of the year. We've got director John Irvin, screenwriter Lawrence Cohen and terror author Peter Straub on our interview schedule—so be here for complete coverage! *Ghost Story's* terror effects were designed by none other than Dick Smith, *the* living master of special makeup effects. Though we spoke to Smith on *Altered States* back in issue #10, an in-depth career piece on Smith is long overdue. We may not have this ready for our next issue, but it's bound to appear here soon! Also stirring about in the makeup department is Chris Tucker, the man who brought *The Elephant Man* to life. Next year's prehistoric epic *Quest For Fire* will feature more Tucker creations, and we are currently putting together the transatlantic connection that will bring you the story of Britain's leading makeup technician! And—more horror in the comics, more Harryhausen (with a complete filmography), and the usual surprise or two!

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thought-provoking in intent, whereas Rocky's overiding intent was to entertain.

O'BRIEN: Yes. The only thing that provoked thought about *Rocky* was "let's look at our sexuality; are we right to condemn the hedonists of society and if so how do we condemn them? What is the value of the hedonistic outlook on life and do you have to pay the price for living that sort of life?" This deals with modern neuroses in the modern marriage in the same way that *Kramer vs. Kramer* dealt with the same problem, but this is dealt with differently. How do we operate as individuals within the framework of the family? The Woman says, "I refuse to be locked and chained to the house and the kids. I want to be recognized as a human being and as a person." Which is quite right and in so doing emasculates the man ... "Where does that leave me?"

FANG: How do you want *Shock Treatment, Rocky Horror* and your career to be seen? As entertainment that makes people think, or as a platform for O'Brien's ...

O'BRIEN: I think for people to say "That was a nice song—you write some nice songs ... that made me tap my foot ... you made me feel good" and I hope they will say "I had a good laugh about that ... that was funny." I hope that they get something out of it, but the minute somebody comes up and says, "You're deep ... I understand the subtle cadences ..." forget it—I'm not interested in them.

FANG: A young American asked you earlier what drugs you take; I suppose because of his preconceptions about someone who made *Rocky Horror* ... someone of his own generation ...

O'BRIEN: Yes, he imagines that you're on something! I must reiterate my feelings about drugs because one *is* asked about them, living in a society where drugs are prevalent, and my feeling is—don't do anything that damages you. If you want to take drugs then, let's face it, most of our mothers are on valium or some other such drug, so you can't really put it down; there's no way society can turn round and start denigrating drugs and start behaving like puritans, like Oliver Cromwell, about drugs. Because society has put most of the rest of society onto the things in the first place; there are not many mothers in England, Australia or New Zealand as far as I know ... which are three societies I know ... who *aren't* on valium.

They have problems—"OK, give them a valium"—we can't start being puritanical about them and, personally, I think that marijuana, grass or whatever you like to call it, is a fairly innocuous sort of drug.

I would say it's less harmful than alcohol. But I wouldn't like to see it legalised. The problem with that is that, if it was legal, someone could go out in their lunch hour and then go back to work having smoked a joint. That's a problem because if they're taxi drivers or something I wouldn't want to be sitting in the back of their cab if they're not in full control.

FANG: When you look back, do you want to be known as "Richard O'Brien Creator of the *Rocky Horror* phenomena" or "Richard O'Brien, Musician, Composer" or are just happy to have whatever ...

O'BRIEN: I don't mind what anybody thinks as long as I have the right to indulge myself in my own little fantasies and it's of nonsense. As far as I'm concerned that's all there is to life. If somebody else gets off on it then that is added, that's cream on the cake. I think you have just got to make your own cake all the time and it's either burned down and people don't want to know about it, or it's successful. Two of the things I have done since *Rocky*, one was a musical called T. Zee and was, in my opinion, actually better than *Rocky*, potentially better anyway, didn't come out of rehearsals. It was written in verse and it was based on the Book of Revelations according to John The Divine; it had a character who was a bit like Tarzan set in the States, and Los Angeles was the last remaining bastion of civilisation. It was 2 miles beneath the surface of the Earth. The earthquake had happened and this little remaining group of people were down in this chasm. I had 21 songs in it.

I'm going to do it again; I think I might do it as a movie, I'm not quite sure yet.

I'll play you one of the songs from it later on; it's got too many good songs in it, it's got some great songs. That got pilloried. Half the critics said "It's nothing like *Rocky Horror*—it's not as good, sad, bad, British musical ... Just goes to show the British can't write musicals!" The other half said "It's exactly the same as *Rocky Horror*—he knows no different. He can't write anything else!" So it couldn't win! But I was actually warned: on the day I said I was going to do another musical someone said: "Well, be prepared, because they don't like you to have two in a row in this country" and it's true. We don't like success in England. We side with the underdog and we don't like anyone to be successful twice. We'll give it to them once, but ... I don't know why it is. I rather like it in a way. I don't think I'd like to live in a society which only recognises success.

All I've tried to do with both *Rocky* and *T. Zee* was bring a rock-and-roll show to people with a storyline so that we have rock and roll songs but through the songs there is a storyline that permeates through.

FANG: Where do you go next?

O'BRIEN: Well, I want to direct. I want to do a movie where you move the camera; you don't cut, cut, cut. You actually move the camera through action. You have loaded that film magazine up, you rehearse and rehearse—I think rehearsals are very important—and I'd like to rehearse for about four weeks with the entire company. Then you go into the sound studio and you have the sound stage all set up and you have the people in different areas of the sound stage so that if it's your song, your bit of business, we're with you for the moment—so it's all master-shot. You just follow on. As soon as that's ended you track on to the next bit of action and you just keep moving so you're not covering anything. No cover shots at all. Maybe, the last week, when you have done all your master shots everything is just tracking.

FANG: Basically you're saying you want to make a movie live? Because that's what theater's all about. You make a mistake, it's done.

O'BRIEN: Yes. Hopefully if you make a mistake you may have three takes on that tracking shot but that tracking shot should be almost a full magazine of film until "Sorry we've got to cut". I would love to make a movie that way. You could shoot it in four weeks; if you rehearse for four or five weeks you should be able to shoot it in four weeks. Go for it. General lighting so everything's lit on the sound stage and we have that camera on a track and we go past people and they do their thing and we pass by them or through them and then we pick up the next bit of action. It would be wonderful. I'd love that.

Doctor Cosmo detects a sign of life in Bert Schnick's chest area.

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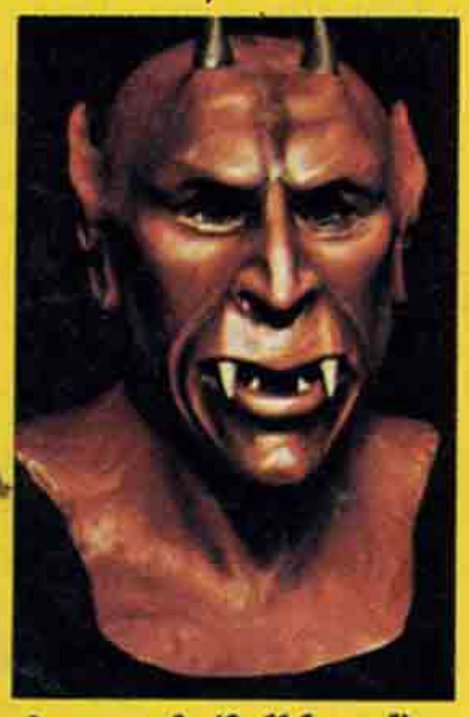

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